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Kibbi and kinship: Lebanese home cooking in Latin America as a method for memory, kinship, and the hybridization of food and identity

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KIBBI AND KINSHIP: LEBANESE HOME COOKING IN LATIN AMERICA AS A METHOD FOR MEMORY, KINSHIP, AND THE HYBRIDIZATION OF FOOD AND IDENTITY

by

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DEDICATION

To the memory of my grandmother, Aurora Salameh, the fiery matriarch of my Lebanese family, who taught me and the women between us everything we know about Lebanese food and boundless love. The way the smell of *kibbi* so powerfully reminds me of her is the essential inspiration for this paper.

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an exploration of the function and usage of traditional dishes and food practices in the home cooking of the descendants of Lebanese immigrants in Latin America, particularly in Argentina. The data gathered for this paper show a significant emphasis on kinship, homage, and taste—more so than identity—as motivation for continuing familial cooking practices. This emphasis is a reflection of the changed relationship between descendants and the homeland of their ancestors, as well as the hybridization of traditional Lebanese foodways and practices with those of the host country. The changed relationship is reflected in ingredients, food production techniques, material culture, taste preferences, and notions of group membership. The data reveal a consistent "Lebanese culinary repertoire" for my particular group of informants and participants, which I describe in this paper and aim to break down the development and significance of this repertoire alongside the new diversity of hybridized food culture(s).

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GLOSSARY OF FOOD AND MATERIAL CULTURE TERMS

The following is a glossary of food terms in Arabic, Spanish, and/or English[1] that are mentioned throughout this study.

Asado — a mealtime ritual rooted in Patagonian gaucho culture wherein several cuts of high-quality meat are chosen and grilled over a low, slow, open fire by *el asador*, or the person responsible for cooking the meat.

Baba Ghannouj — [*baba gannoush*] fire roasted eggplant skinned and mixed with tahini, olive oil, lemon, garlic, and salt. *Baba Ghannouj* is commonly served as part of a *mezze* eaten with bread as a dip

Bulgur — [*burghul*] "a product made by parboiling wheat, parching it to dry it, and coarsely grinding it. The outer layers of bran are then removed… and the grains cracked" (Jaine 2014, 120). For the Lebanese dishes in this study of which bulgur is a part, the grain is soaked in tepid water until soft, drained of all excess water, and fluffed.

Carniceria — butcher shop.

Empanadas Arabes — commonly known and widely used word for *fatayer* in Argentina.

Fatayer — turnovers (hand pies) filled with meat or vegetables (usually spinach or chard leaves).

Fatteh — pieces of stale or toasted flatbread topped with a variety of ingredients, often yogurt and/or chickpeas, and olive oil.

Fattoush — salad of greens (usually romaine type) with tomatoes, cucumber, olives, sheep cheese, sumac, and vinaigrette thickened with pomegranate molasses.

Faraykee — wheat roasted when it is green which gives off a slight smoky flavor. Served as a side (like rice).

Hummus — puree of chickpeas [*garbanzos*], tahini, garlic, lemon, olive oil, cold water, and salt. *Hummus* is commonly served as a dip for Arabic bread or as part of a *mezze.*

[1] I have used the spelling(s) given me by my respondents and/or with which I am most familiar; please note that same dishes have a great many spellings.

Kafta [*kefta*] "ground meat with parsley, onion, and spices" (Hamady 1987, 268).

Kibbi [kebbeh, kebbe, kofteh] "…colloquial for *kubaybah*, is renowned amongst Middle East dishes. The word comes from the verb which means, "to form into a ball." Basically, with the exception of *kibbi bis-sayniyyi* [layers of *kibbi* pressed into a flat dish, scored, and baked], a ball of the mixture is used in shaping the desired forms; that is, spheres, patties, domes, etc. The basic ingredients for *kibbi* are *burghul,* or crushed wheat, and meat. From these two simple ingredients, a variety of gourmet dishes are made. *Kibbi* may be served as an entrée, an hors d'oeuvre, or as a Lenten dish" (Farah 1997, 59).

Kishik [*kishk*] "*laban* and *burghul* fermented together, dried and ground" (Farah 1997, 140).

Koosa zucchini.

Laban yogurt or cultured milk.

Labneh *laban* strained at room temperature for anywhere from 12-20 hours to achieve desired consistency—usually thick—and used as a dip, spread, and topping for many dishes.

Mate a drink made with the dried leaves of the yerba plant indigenous to South America (Jaine 2014, 499). *Mate* is commonplace in Argentina as an energizing substance, a ritual shared with family and friends, and a symbol of Argentine identity. The word '*mate*' also refers to the gourd from which it is consumed.

Mana'eesh savory flatbread topped with *za'atar* (mixed with olive oil). Popular Lebanese 'street food' and snack.

Maamoul [*ma'amoul*] "molded, semolina cookies filled with dates or nuts" (Hamady 1987, 268).

Milanesa thin-cut/pounded, lightly breaded, and pan-fried meat. Popular dish for quick, casual meals in Argentina and widely available at Argentine deli counters and grocers.

Mezze an assortment of hot and cold dishes—usually small and many—served together, most often as a casual, social meal for larger groups. Barbara Massad aptly describes the social and cultural implications of the word:

"If a single image could define our unique culture and heritage, it would certainly depict an oversized table groaning with small, colorful plates of food, surrounded by happy people caught in the act of socializing and sharing a meal. We connect to each other as plates are passed and conversations rise and fall. *Mezze* reflects a casual setting, where one shares good food, pleasant drink and conviviality with family and friends. Preparing the mezze, therefore, is more important than ever as an element of our social fabric" (2014, 14).

Shawarma thin cuts of meat layered in a cone shape and cooked on a vertical rotisserie. The meat is 'shaved' off the rotisserie in thin slices and wrapped in Arabic bread with vegetables and a yogurt sauce. The word *shawarma* refers to the meat preparation as well as the wrap.

Shisbaraak [*chisbaraak*] small meat dumplings cooked in yogurt and spices.

Sfija/Sfiha small, open-face flatbread or hand-pie topped, usually topped with cheese, meat, red pepper paste or *za'atar*

Tabbouleh a fresh, cold salad made of parsley, tomatoes, bulgur, lemon juice, olive oil, green onion, and salt. *Tabbouleh* is commonly served as part of a *mezze.*

Tahini an "oily, creamy paste which is extracted from sesame seeds" (Jaine 2014, 802).

Warak Arish [*warak enab*] stuffed grape or chard leaves.

Za'atar the Arabic word for the variety of thyme native to the Levant. The word is also used to refer to the popular mixture of thyme (*za'atar*), sesame seed, and sumac. "In it's simplest form, *zaatar* is used to garnish *labneh*… The bread called *mana'eesh bil-za'atar* is popular in Lebanon, especially for breakfast; the dough is spread with a mixture of *zaatar* mixed with some olive oil before being baked" (Jaine 2014, 889).

MATERIAL CULTURE TERMS

El Mortero — *jidurn* in Arabic. Medium or large stone mortar historically used to grind meat for *kibbi nayeh* [raw kibbi]. The *jidurn* has largely been replaced by modern technology but remains in many homes as décor or symbolic material culture.

Ibrik — small, copper pot with a long, protruding handle used for making Turkish or Arabic coffee.

Mamulera — decorative wooden mold used for shaping *maamoul* cookies.

Chapter I: Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore the practice, significance, and development over time of 'traditional' home cooking for the descendants of Lebanese immigrants in Argentina and greater Latin America. This is an exploratory paper suggestive of themes that could be examined more deeply through more localized research (Rowe 2012). Nonetheless, this study supports a number of conclusions about this dynamic diasporic group and its relationship to traditional food practices. Narratives and responses about meaning in memory, kinship, and tradition tell an important story about motivations for engaging in food and cooking practices among the descendants of the Lebanese diaspora in Latin America. My study shows that my participants and respondents engage in food and cooking practice as a largely unselfconscious reproduction of cultural identity motivated primarily by a desire to connect with their kin, to evoke memories of their past, and to preserve the gastronomic heritage taught to them—whether directly or indirectly—by their immigrant ancestors.

The contemporary narratives of descendants of the Lebanese diaspora in Latin America are rich examples of the resilience of a widespread culture and cuisine. The narratives also reveal the function of food and cooking in connecting to one's kin, as an act of memory, and re-imagining (and re-presenting) identity and familial history. I began this research with several key questions; How do the millions of Lebanese people who have settled in the Americas express and connect to identity and heritage through food and cooking, if at all? How have the food cultures of the host countries, as well as their respective social histories, changed or influenced the cooking practices of the resident Lebanese over time? What are the processes involved in those changes? What traditional Lebanese foods do they cook, with what frequency, and on what occasion(s)? How are those dishes consistent or inconsistent with what is cooked by diasporic

Lebanese people in neighboring countries and of different generations? Finally, and most importantly, how do individual narratives in the context of food and cooking negate or reinforce ideas about identity practice and representation among the descendants of the Lebanese diaspora?

My research is influenced by scholars in multiple disciplines, including but not limited to anthropology, history, sensory studies, neurology, and sociology. I sought out exemplary scholarly works pertaining to the topics of diaspora, identity, memory, and sensory ethnography (e.g., Blake 2001; Mintz 2008; Rowe 2012; Sutton 2005; Zubaida 1994). In addition, there is a small but ever-growing body of research pertaining to the Middle Eastern diaspora that is focused on social and cultural experience, including studies of food and foodways (e.g., Ballofett 2016; Kanafani-Zahar 1997; Rowe 2012; Zubaida and Tapper 1994). I seek to place my research and data within the frame of diaspora and identity and will explain the scholarship and principles that make up that frame in this next section. The present study is more interested in the memory, sensory, and culinary work as it is carried out in the home and kitchen by my participants and respondents, so the following section looks at memory and sensory studies as a foundation for understanding the data that emerged from this work.

The *Mahjar:* Diaspora and Identity

> Beginning in the late nineteenth century, more than a quarter of a million people from the current geographic territory of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine began to emigrate from the crumbling Ottoman Empire to Latin America. Driven primarily by the lure of opportunity, and even prosperity, that American horizons offered, these waves of immigrants were not refugees as is the case today. Exact numbers are difficult to pinpoint, but by 1940 some three hundred thousand Arabic speakers from the Eastern Mediterranean had arrived in Latin America, from Northern Mexico to the Patagonian territory (Balloffet 2016, 10).

The present study is about the important "link between the movement of people and their food-related behavior" (Mintz 2008, 518), and the way in which that food-related behavior functions in identity building, group membership, and social relationships. The vast majority of respondents in this study are descendent of the first wave of Lebanese migration to the Americas.[2] Thus, in analyzing their experience in present-day Latin America, it is vital to consider the trajectory of immigration as well as the complex, constantly changing, and often homogenizing notion of diaspora identification for Lebanese throughout the world. The migrants of which the majority of my participants and respondents are descendant—largely Christians from the region of Mount Lebanon—were not forced from their homes but instead made a choice to pursue greater economic and social opportunity abroad as "an inflated population faced tougher times and young men used savings to leave the country. Some women stayed as household heads; many joined their husbands in the Americas. The great Christian emigration was an upheaval for both sexes, with a mixing of cultures and gender roles in the New World…" (Harris 2014, 168).

In recent years, Lilly Balloffet (2016) has conducted in-depth historical research on the Argentine *mahjar* and the trajectory of their lives since they first arrived in Argentina.[3] Balloffet's findings offer a better understanding of both the size of the *mahjar* communities in Argentina and throughout Latin America, as well as where, when, and how they navigated the social, cultural, and political landscape of their new home at the time. Balloffet writes about two waves of migration: the first coincided with the collapse of the Ottoman empire at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century; the second occurred in the mid- to late twentieth century at the time of the Lebanese civil war. Balloffet's research is more focused in

[2] see Table 1.
[3] The word *mahjar* refers to the global Arab diaspora, as defined by Balloffet (2015).

the first wave of immigration, during which strong social networks were established in Argentina and Latin America, and the way in which those networks and communities come into play for later migrations. In this paper, I will refer to the diaspora and to descendants of the diaspora as a way to differentiate between members of the immigrating *mahjar* and their descendants. I do this in order to shed light on the differences in identity building, belonging, and culture experienced by the two groups.

The concept of diaspora, specifically in the context of Lebanese people, is considered by Humphrey (2004) as a constantly changing and sometimes problematic identification:

> The term diaspora has come into vogue in the last decade because it captures the ambiguities of contemporary social belonging. Diaspora refers to a form of social relations produced by the displacement from home. It implies a very conventional anthropological perspective on social life, the persistence of tradition (identity) despite its displacement from place of origin. It fits within the dichotomy between tradition and modernity in which the anticipated loss of tradition is resisted. Yet current usage of the term includes not only the persistence of tradition (identity) as a product of collective resistance to cultural loss but also qualified acceptance by the host society. (2004, 32).

Humphrey goes on to argue that the Lebanese diaspora identification was brought into its "present self-consciousness" by the displacement that occurred as a result of the Lebanese civil war (2004, 32). Those displaced by the war constitute the majority of the second wave of migration from Lebanon to the Americas but their experience as members of the diaspora is markedly different than members and descendants of the first wave of migration in that they departed from Lebanon under distinct political circumstances and arrived to the Americas after the establishment of Middle Eastern communities there (and a different sociocultural consciousness in members of the dominant culture, for better or worse).

Humphrey further differentiates between "Those individuals and families still nurturing a kinship and identification with a Lebanese heritage[,] as opposed to those who have assimilated to the extent of abandoning any Lebanese connection, seek to restore Lebanese identity

genealogically through family memories retrieved in stories, mementos and official archives" (2004, 43). The social and political climate of Argentina at the time of the arrival of the first wave of immigrants was such that cultural differentiation was contrary to successful assimilation and acceptance into the host society (Humphrey 2004). In this environment, the family home provided a neutral and safe space wherein diasporic peoples could express cultural identity and engage in cultural practices—such as food preparation and consumption—without risking their contingent belonging or successful assimilation into the host society. The data of the present study support Humphrey's description of the way in which the 'old' community (the first wave of immigrants and their descendants) restore or reproduce Lebanese identity. The data for this study show that kinship and family memories are the primary motivators for descendants of the Lebanese diaspora to engage in traditional food and cooking practice.

Analyses of the production or reproduction of identity in diaspora becomes problematic when viewed from a position of assuming a singular, collective identity shared by those with a common history or ancestry (Hall 2004, 318). Stuart Hall notes that "identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as 'production' which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside representation" (2004, 318). This view of identity allows a perspective that accounts for individual difference in the production of identity among members of the same diasporic group, consideration for inevitable changes over time in the reproduction of cultural identity, and the effect of historical, social, and political contexts on the cultural practices of ethnic communities. Concentrating on the localized personal narratives of descendants of the

Lebanese diaspora in Latin America counters the anonymity and homogeneity of an assumed or imagined collective identity and its associated food practices and preferences.

In considering any diaspora or immigrant experience, the concept of 'homeland' plays a significant role both in its distinctions across generations and the varying perspectives of homeland taken by members of the diaspora. Recognizing the generational gap in immigration and the distinctions in how groups and generations connect to 'the homeland' (Moser and Racy 2010) is essential to understanding the meanings and significance of food and cooking practices for Lebanese people in modern-day Latin America. Moser and Racy's analysis of "The Homeland in the Literature and Music of Syrian-Lebanese Immigrants and their Descendants in Brazil" (2010) provides a valuable framework for understanding differing 'orientations' to the homeland within the same diaspora group. The authors identify five prominent orientations, which I will discuss further in Chapter III, that loosely parallel a generational/time trajectory for Syrian-Lebanese immigrants in Brazil. This framework allowed me to better understand the relationship to 'homeland' for members my study group.

Taste of Thyme: Culinary Cultures in the Middle East, compiled and edited by Zubaida and Tapper (1994), is an invaluable collection of papers that gives shape to specific foods, cultures, and histories, and sheds light on historical, global, and cultural contexts specific to Middle Eastern foodscape(s). Zubaida's (1994) paper on "National, Communal and Global Dimensions in Middle Eastern Food Cultures" provides a critical foundation for the origin and history of several of the food practices to which I refer in this analysis. In telling a history within the context of food, instead of the other way around, Zubaida's work has allowed me to place my informants' experience in a broader, historical context, thereby influencing both my analytical perspective and the conclusions I have drawn from the data.

There is a good deal of existing scholarship concerned with the concept of food practices as an expression of personal and group identity (e.g., Anderson 2014; Blend 2001; Mintz 2008; Wilk 1999), relevant in both the self-conscious and unselfconscious implications of food behavior as it relates to ethnicity, culture, gender, religion, community, group membership, and nationhood. Anderson notes, "All these social matters can be discussed in a remote, clinical way, but they are desperately important to the individuals who do the eating. Food study requires a phenomenology, a study of how individuals perceive and experience their world" (2014, 187). By focusing on the narratives and everyday experiences of my participants and informants in the kitchen, I intend to explore the personal and emotional aspects of their food behavior in an effort emphasize the role and nuance of food and cooking practice in shaping their perception and experience of the world—in this case, self-identifying Lebanese people who call the Americas home—as well as the effects of such food behavior on culinary traditions and processes within and beyond that world. Thus, the significance of this study lies in shifting the emphasis to my participants' and respondents' perception of their world instead of the perception of that world by others—be it scholars, observers, or people outside of the identified group.

Localizing Diaspora Studies

In order to understand the important role of food and cooking practices in my participants' and respondents' perception of their world, we must first understand, to some extent, the shape of their world by localizing the narratives within this study. Diana Mata Codesal's work has influenced my own in considering both the limitations and strengths of the conclusions I draw from an analysis of single-site fieldwork in Buenos Aires alongside survey responses from respondents throughout Latin America with the same or similar diasporic

lineage. Codesal points out that "talking about food in contexts of migration is a label too broad. It needs to be 'localized' as each migration scenario allows…" (2010, 30). Diana Mata Codesal's research (2010) encompasses the experience of Ecuadorian migrants in three specific locations and establishes her research in a transnational context, which helps to provide a lens for transnational relationships not rooted in a lived experience in the 'homeland.' The way in which Codesal draws meaning from the data and her analysis has helped guide my own careful examination of meaning in my participants' and respondents' experience.

Amy E. Rowe's article, "The Assimilated Lebanese Diaspora in New England" (2012), further demonstrates what can be learned in conducting and comparing localized studies of specific immigrant groups well established in their host country. Rowe's research on the local food culture of people of Lebanese descent in New England provides a fruitful complement and comparison to my own research in that my informants are members of the same ethnic/diaspora group but in a different location. Rowe also carefully considers the implications, results, and variances of an individual or group's assimilation, which she defines as "meaning to shed all ethnic and cultural signifiers and embrace American [host country] values, lifestyles, and behaviors" (2012, 213). Participants in Rowe's study "note they have Lebanese ancestors and Lebanese heritage, but do not generally identify as Lebanese—except when discussing, preparing, and enjoying food" (2012, 212). Rowe's study group assimilated upon their arrival in the US under great pressure to do so by the WASP establishment (2012, 213). While some Lebanese embraced the social and economic opportunities of assimilation, Rowe notes that many were much less keen on giving up their cultural and ethnic customs. While my informants exhibit very similar behavior to those in Rowe's study in terms of food and cooking practice and appear very well integrated as a result of a similar voluntary assimilation by their grandparents and

parents, my informants suggest a history of acculturation more than assimilation[4] in that they proudly identify as both Lebanese and of the country in which they reside.

Codesal's and Rowe's studies are informative in their exploration of food and immigration, and their discussions of both localization and meaning are particularly relevant for my study. The survey respondents in this study have identified both their place of origin and residence so that I am able to localize their individual responses. I have noted the location of each narrative or anecdote (an explanation of my methods is forthcoming) in the following analysis to localize each experience as well as to highlight similarities and/or differences between distinct host countries among descendants of the Lebanese diaspora. By localizing these experiences, I am able to take a closer look at culinary trends that persist across time and space while also problematizing generalizations and assumptions of experience, practice, and cuisine among the widespread, multi-generational Lebanese diaspora in Latin America.

Hybridization, Creolization, and Standardization

I also analyze the persistent Lebanese culinary repertoire that emerged from the data and bring into question the circumstances under which a consistent 'national cuisine' (Appadurai 1988) was adopted by such a widespread ethnic community. This shared lexicon is balanced out in near-equal measure by dishes that have emerged from processes of hybridization and creolization. In *The World in Creolization* (1987), Ulf Hannerz argues for an anthropological perspective that considers a world system creating new diversity based on interrelations, or the creolization of culture. He writes:

[4] The distinction between acculturation and assimilation being that acculturation implies the intent to adopt cultural and social traits of the host society—or blend with one's native culture—without necessarily erasing or concealing one's ethnic or cultural markers.

> As I see it myself, creole cultures like creole languages are those which draw in some way on two or more historical sources, often originally widely different. They have had some time to develop and integrate, and to become elaborate and pervasive. People are formed from birth by these systems of meaning and largely live their lives in contexts shaped by them. There is that sense of a continuous spectrum of interacting forms, in which the various contributing sources of the culture are differentially visible and active (1987, 552).

This definition of creole culture or creolization aptly suits my informants' experiences of identity and food practice in that their ethnic (Lebanese) and national (Latin American) identities are "differentially visible" and often remain separate in a culinary context though the "continuous spectrum of interacting forms" has yielded many instances of hybridization in food and cooking practice.

Richard Wilk (2006, 6-7) refers to Hannerz's concept of creolization (in the context of food) as 'hybridity,' or the "creative new mixtures of local cultures" wherein individuals and groups can acculturate by blending the cultural characteristics of the host society with their own ethnic signifiers and traditions. Wilk writes, "Hannerz's idea of creolization allows people to move through a global marketplace without losing their cultural identities; they just have to keep up the creative acts that lie at the core of all cultures, even the ones that seem highly traditional" (2006, 7). The preservation and recognition of the cultural and historical sources from which a hybridized food or practice emerge are essential to Hannerz's and Wilk's definitions of hybridization and creolization. Wilk recognizes the reverse process as a form of cultural appropriation in which the original identity of a food, food practice, or object may be lost or hidden through its adoption and use by a dominant culture. In many instances, my informants offer evidence of appropriation by the local culture in hybridized dishes that have been adapted to suit and absorbed into local food culture to the extent that the sources of the dish are no longer visible and the dish becomes 'local' (Wilk 2006, 7).

My analysis of the emergent Lebanese culinary repertoire alongside examples of hybridized foods highlights the contrast between the erasure of regional distinction from the place of origin in establishing a 'national cuisine' in diaspora and the simultaneous creation of a 'new diversity' that challenges notions of culinary homogeneity in its myriad hybridized food and cooking practices. Analyzing the specific— 'national,' traditional, and hybridized—dishes that my study group prepares on a regular basis also leads to an exploration of the significance of cooking knowledge, skill, gesture sequence, and taste. I have presented the data in a way that I hope will elucidate the everyday practices, food behaviors, and preferences of my study group as a representation of the way they experience and enact their own identity, memory, and connection to kin, while also representing their own notions of traditional Lebanese food. This study encompasses a moment in time and analyzes processes of identity building, creolization, and memory that are representative of this moment and certain to change with shifting dominant cultures and perspectives on foreignness. The goal is to capture this moment in time as one step or phase in the development of distinct personal narratives, changing group membership, and the emergence of a new diversity.

Memory and Sensory Studies

If diaspora and identity studies are to provide the frame for this research, with a strong consideration of the localities of my informants, memory and sensory studies are the bedrock of my approach to the research. The data show that the production or reproduction of Lebanese identity among my study group is essentially a byproduct of memories accessed by the sensory practice(s) of food and cooking. This qualitative, ethnographic fieldwork is meant to complement, localize, and humanize existing research on the Lebanese diaspora, of which there

is little pertaining specifically to food practices and home cooking. As my informants number nearly 30 distinct individuals (at different levels of engagement), however, I do make some conclusions about the significant connections between memory and the senses in the context of food and cooking practice.

My decision to focus on home cooking and everyday food practices was largely informed and inspired by David Sutton's impressive body of food studies related to memory and the senses (Sutton 2001; 2005; 2006; 2010). Sutton explores, among other topics, "memory, historical consciousness and the relevance of the past in daily life" (Southern Illinois University 2018), primarily in Greece and with Greek immigrants in the world. Sutton extracts valuable information about memory and meaning from his experiences in the kitchen with his subjects and his observations of the crucial role of the senses in constructing that meaning. Sutton writes:

> I think a consensus (no pun intended) has begun to develop in studies of the senses that we are not dealing with radical cultural difference, but with shifting emphases, with cultural elaborations on a continuum of experience… I have also argued (Sutton 2001) that this focus on intersensory connection is a potential facilitator of memory, that the cultural elaboration of taste and smell, and their interconnections, can lead to food, for example, to be more memorable (Sutton 2006, 90).

Sutton's work informed my theoretical approach in its emphasis on the potent and telling connection between sensory experience and memory, specifically in kitchenspace[5] and among people who identify with a particular culture.

Waskul, Vannini, and Wilson argue that, "recalling is an act which is overwhelmingly *sensory*" (2009, 18). While we may often credit our ability to identify or recognize something or someone to language, experience, or visual cues, each of the five senses plays a critical role in

[5] In Maria Elisa Christie's (2008) ethnography *Kitchenspace: Women, Fiestas, and Everyday Life in Central Mexico,* she defines kitchenspace not as domestic space but the space within family life where food preparation and consumption takes place, which often extends beyond the kitchen. Christie emphasizes the potential for kitchenspace to serve as a site of community building, cultural resistance, and the preservation of tradition.

triggering recognition and remembering. The multisensory triggers of cooking practice are easy to recognize in the cooking I did with one of my participants, Aida, whom I will introduce to you in the next chapter—Aida mixes meat and bulgur with her hands to make her mother's signature dish, only stopping to taste test the mixture and pour hot water for *mate* into a thermos upon hearing the whistle of a kettle, then returning to the meat and bulgur mixture to arrange and score it so it looks just right before putting it into the oven to await the familiar aroma that will let her know it's done, and finally the first taste—which completes the construction of a whole and powerful memory. I will expand on this example and the way in which it demonstrates the importance of the senses in Chapter V.

Figure 1.1 Aida's hands at work preparing kibbi.

Sutton (2005, 311) states that through the "cultural elaboration of certain sensory registers," the process of synesthesia, and our brains' aptitude to construct a desired whole, we

can recall an integrated sense of home, family, and fond memories through cooking. In his book *Neurogastronomy,* Gordon Shepherd (2013, 155) describes what he calls the "human brain flavor system" and its direct connection with the part of our brains that produces emotion and memory—the hippocampus. In Shephard's chapter on Flavor and Memory, he describes the principal behind Proust's famous madeleine memory, and food memories in general, as:

> an internal reactivation of the distributed sensory regions bound together by their connections to the hippocampus. Rather than a perfect memory bursting forth, it appears that Proust was describing positively reinforcing sensory stimuli from a childhood experience, stored in their respective central sensory representations, bound together by their connections to the hippocampus, and re-accessed, beginning with partial flavor cues, as a unified internal image or object by the brain mechanisms of attention, motivation, and emotion (2013, 183).

Without conducting a deep analysis of the sensory and neurological functions at play, this study will look at the multisensory triggers—of food, material culture, kitchenspace, etc.—that reactivate and unite experiences and emotions stored by the brain that serve to animate the connection between food and memory in the experience(s) of my informants.

Cooking as Inquiry: an Ethnographic Approach

A major focus of this paper is to analyze the significance and role of memory and kinship in the continuum of food and cooking practices among descendants of the Lebanese diaspora, as well as the resultant—if also unselfconscious—production and reproduction of identity. It is impossible to get a faithful reading of a food subject if we strip away process, knowledge, gesture, and/or environment. What we have learned or been trained to do or think, whether consciously or not, and the contexts of taste experiences are an integral part of how we perform and experience food and cooking. I particularly appreciate this eloquent statement of that concept: "Internalized into the psyche and integrated into everyday social life, this worldly

intelligence of taste determines how one acts and also how one thinks of oneself" (Ferguson 2011, 381). For this reason, I adopted a mixed research method that would enable me to consider the many layers of food behavior and meaning, with a particular emphasis on the context, products, experience, history, and trajectory of home cooking among my study group, which I observed in their own kitchens.

This study centers around interviews and surveys, as well as cooking with five participants. The methods I used were largely inspired by a number of food studies scholars who have conducted research in a manner most closely aligned with sensory ethnography (Brady 2011; Kanafani-Zahar 1997; Rowe 2012; Sutton 2005). These scholars have embarked on social, cultural, and even economic research projects that all have one thing in common—each researcher steps into the kitchen with his or her subjects as a significant, if not the primary, method of research. I followed suit in my own research when possible and will use the data derived from cooking and/or eting with five individuals during visits to each of their homes (or, in one case, place of business) in Buenos Aires, Argentina. My participants[6] chose the food we made together and I made observations and notes about food behavior, skill, technique, recall, and associated meaning during my time with each of them.

I looked to Sutton's approach of conducting research and fieldwork in the kitchen to unpack the link between food behavior, memory, and the senses in constructing meaning. In addition to taking this participatory and multisensory approach, I adopted Jennifer Brady's method of "cooking as inquiry" with my participants in Argentina. Brady writes, "Cooking as inquiry builds on the existing foundation of food scholarship by offering a methodological approach that understands food not simply as an object of study, but makes foodmaking the

[6] I will refer to the people with whom I did in-person interviews as my 'particpants.' Survey respondents will be referred to as 'respondents.'

means of garnering understanding about food, identity, and the body" (2011, 323). Incorporating the processes of food production and the food itself as sites of knowledge provides a much deeper understanding of the relativity of food to self and the world, or in other words, understanding how you or another person perceives and experiences their world.

In the Field: Research Methods and Analysis

I prepared for this fieldwork by drafting a set of interview questions which I included in an approved, exempt IRB proposal (Protocol #4767X, Appendix E). I followed the process of informed consent with each of my participants and attempted to reorient the natural trajectory of our conversation towards the questions most pertinent to the individual and to my study. My analysis focuses on particular content from conversations with my participants, observations of their cooking practices if there was an opportunity to do so, and special attention to sentiments around memory and identity in relation to food. The material from my fieldwork is compiled so as to highlight relevant data and narratives around how the descendants of this diaspora group use food and cooking to access memories, connect with their kin, and preserve their heritage. All interviews were conducted in Spanish as it is the native language of all of my informants.

In order to extend my research beyond Argentina and contextualize the data within the frame of greater Latin America, I wrote and distributed a survey on the topic of home food practices of Latin Americans of Lebanese descent, submitted to and approved by the IRB as a changes clarification form (Appendix E). Sergio, the director of CELIBAL (the Center for Lebanese Studies for Latin America), kindly distributed the survey to members of the organization (Appendix C). The many survey responses I received provide data that underpin themes derived from the more in-depth interviews conducted during my fieldwork, specifically

bringing to the fore the repertoire of 'traditional' Lebanese dishes that have survived over time as well as the function of these cooking practices as they relate to connection and memory. Some responses from participants who live in Latin American countries other than Argentina also show the different ways in which Lebanese food has been uniquely hybridized and/or appropriated in distinct environments and culinary landscapes across the continent and among the significant Lebanese diaspora living there today.

In addition to interviews and surveys, I spent time observing and taking notes on Middle Eastern restaurants, grocers, gathering spaces, and restaurant menus in Buenos Aires during my six weeks of fieldwork there. In some cases, a comparison between the home cooking of my informants and the restaurant culture of Buenos Aires reveal significant differences in the representation, visibility, and characterization of Lebanese food (or *comida arabe*) in Latin America. I have also used cookbooks as primary sources in analyzing what I call the Lebanese culinary repertoire as well as associated ingredients and the concept of national cuisine. I used NVivo to organiza and analyze the data gathered during my fieldwork and to allow me to identify emerging themes, consistent trends, and striking differences. It is my intention to use my informants' lived narratives to tell this story and support my conclusions, and I have placed excerpts from our conversations and responses from survey respondents throughout this paper to emphasize the importance of narrative as well as to support more general themes or concepts.

I engaged in the research process with an inductive approach to avoid the influence or narrowness of established hypotheses or pre-conceived notions about food practices, and to work towards answers to the above questions without seeking supporting data for a specific conclusion or concept. This open-ended approach puts presumed themes into question and allows my research to speak directly as to the most significant practices, meanings, and motivations

represented in my observations and survey responses. This approach allowed me to arrive at meaningful conclusions about the role of food and foodways in the personal, social, and cultural life of the descendants of the Lebanese diaspora in contemporary Argentina and Latin America.

The forthcoming analysis is organized to match concepts to everyday food practice. I explore the predominant themes that emerged from my research—the role of memory in the production and consumption of Lebanese food, the connection to kin sought out in shared food practices, and the notion of food as homage. These themes emerged as products of inductive reasoning and the following chapters provide a deeper investigation of the specific practices, practices, traditions, and continuities that illustrate the themes I have identified.

Chapter II is a close-up of each of my participants in Buenos Aires as well as general and demographic data about respondents to the online survey. These narratives provide important context and background information for understanding my study group's distinct and common experience(s) as the descendants of diasporic peoples. Knowing their personal stories and biographies also illustrates the reality hybrid identities. I bring about the predominant themes of memory, kinship, and homage in Chapter III. In Chapter IV, I look at parallels and distinctions between the landscape from which the traditional food comes (Lebanon) and the host countries in which it is being prepared by members of the diaspora in Latin America (my study group). I use the analysis and comparison of landscape and ingredients to shed light on the specific culinary processes that take place in hybridization. I explore and analyze the persistent Lebanese culinary repertoire in Chapter IV and its standardization across countries and cultures as well as implications around the preservation of tradition and identity therein.

Chapter V brings the discussion into the kitchen to analyze discuss meaning and motivation in food preparation and material culture. I explore a consistent emphasis on

traditional cooking practice and changes in food production over time as they relate to kinship, memory, and homage. I address one final but highly important theme in Chapter VI—knowledge transfer. This includes a discussion of how descendants learn Lebanese food traditions both within the home and without, thus with kin and beyond kin. This discussion is relevant to understanding the limitations of the culinary repertoire at home, as well as the hybridization of foods and diffusion of the cuisine beyond the Lebanese state and community.

The present study is aimed at elaborating on the process of identity building in the context of creolized culture and food practices while also giving shape to the sensory registers and practices that allow my study group to access memory, kinship, and community. The data show that, instead of an intent to connect with a lost homeland, the enactment of food practices by my participants and respondents is motivated by the desire to connect with their kin and community. Instead of making broad generalizations about how and with what food, food practices, and objects my participants and respondents do so, I hope to illustrate the memory practice and hybridization of culture that they exemplify in their enactment and engagement of food, food practices, and material culture. In analyzing the data, I added one more important question to consider; what can we learn if we loosen our attachment to the 'traditional' food and food practices of a singular culture in lieu of embracing the new diversity born of the creolization of culture and hybridization of identity?

Finally, I will close this section by briefly relating my own personal connection to this research. Stuart Hall (1990, 318) wrote, "it is worth remembering that all discourse is 'placed,' and the heart has its reasons." I conducted the fieldwork for this paper in Argentina in the spring of 2018 with the support of a generous grant from the James Beard Foundation. This research trip marked my fourth visit to Argentina, a country I developed a strong affinity for during the

time I have spent there. My past experience in Argentina, during which I lived primarily with Argentine families, gave me a general understanding of Argentine food culture, tradition, and cultural representation, albeit from an 'outsider' perspective, that was useful during my fieldwork. Furthermore, I am a second-generation Lebanese woman; my mother immigrated from Beirut, Lebanon, to the United States with her family in the early 1960s. My background and experience with Lebanese food practices and cultural (re)production provide a unique foundation for this research and a helpful point of connection with my informants. This background—as well as my love for home cooking and food culture—was also central to my chosen research methods, which I describe here.

Chapter II: The Guests: The Production and (Re)production of Hybrid Identity

After several unsuccessful attempts to contact or meet Lebanese people in Buenos Aires, I knocked on the door of *Catedral San Marón*, a 1901 Lebanese Maronite Church in the middle of what is now downtown Buenos Aires. I met Andres—the Church's longtime pastor from Lebanon—who invited me to join the cooks in the kitchen the next day while they prepared food for the church's saint's day that coming Sunday. El *Día del San Marón*[7] is officially February 9th, but the celebration had serendipitously been postponed to March 10 to coincide with the arrival of the new Lebanese ambassador to Argentina. The day before the celebration, I returned to the Church to cook and talk with Mari and Rosanna, the two Argentine women employed as cooks for the Church and annexed elementary school (interview, March 9, 2018).

I went back to the Church that day before the gathering to help make food with Mari and Rosanna in a terribly humid kitchen for the two hundred or so people that would gather the next day for *Dia del San Maron.* The two women have no Lebanese heritage, but because of their employment by the Church, they are well versed in the Lebanese culinary repertoire. We prepared meat and vegetable *fatayer* (called *empanadas arabes* in Argentina), *mana'eesh bil za'atar*, and *kibbi*—everything in miniature except the *kibbi,* which was the largest dish of *kibbi* I've ever seen. A bag of yogurt was hanging under a table at the side of the room, soon to become *labneh*. Mari and Rosanna told me they don't much care for Middle Eastern desserts, so all the day's pastries were typical Argentine sweets. In that kitchen I found an invaluable perspective on Lebanese food from two women with decades of cooking experience between them but who had not grown up with the food or culture. My observations of their cooking

[7] "St. Maroun, also known as Saint Maron, was a 5th century Syrian Christian monk who after his death was followed by a religious movement that became known as the Maronites. The Church that grew from this movement is the Maronite Church" (St. Elias Maronite Catholic Church).

practice and the way in which the associated gestures parallel those of my Lebanese participants (or don't) provided an important example of knowledge transfer and diffusion, as well as the standardization of the cuisine.

I met Aida the next day at the Church gathering the next day when I offered her my seat. Aida is 86 years old and walks with a downward curve in her shoulders. She is lively and curious and navigates the world and people around her with a conviction and confidence only born of 86 years of life. The offer of a seat eventually led to an invitation to her house later that week for lunch and some cooking (interview, March 20, 2018). Aida's parents immigrated to Argentina from Lebanon around the year 1927, when her oldest sister was just four years old.[9] Aida's father had joined his cousins in Argentina a few years prior, when he was just twenty-one or twenty-two years old. He returned to Lebanon to reunite with and ultimately marry Aida's mother. He built a house in Lebanon and worked there for some time to save money. The family immigrated to Argentina soon after they lost their infant son to an illness that gravely impacted their community. Aida was born not long after in Buenos Aires and grew up with her two parents and four siblings in the house where she still lives.

Figure 2.1 Aida concentrating on her cooking.

[9] The year of the family's immigration was deduced from the following information told to me by Aida: Aida's sister was four years old when the family immigrated to Argentina and would be ninety-five years old in 2018. Thus, the family immigrated about 91 years ago. Please reference full transcript in Appendix E.

Mariana, to whom I was introduced and with whom I connected via Instagram, is the owner of a new small business venture for which she prepares, sells, and distributes small-batch *hummus* to individuals and businesses throughout the city (interview, April 2, 2018). Mariana is my youngest informant—in her early thirties—and a vivid representation of hybrid identity. She lives with her husband and toddler in a neighborhood where much of her family resides. Mariana's grandmother, who is Argentine-born of Italian descent, learned to cook Lebanese food from her sister-in-law and mother-in-law. Mariana describes growing up around the table with her family and identifies strongly with the Lebanese heritage taught to her at home. In her cooking and at her table, she strives to match the meals and dishes that her grandmother and mother cooked at home. Mariana is creative and experimental with Lebanese food but describes a great respect for her grandfather and the traditional recipes he and his family brought to Argentina.

Figure 2.2 Mariana and her family in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

I met Diego at his restaurant, *Chelvie* – one of many open-air food counters in the old San Telmo market in Buenos Aires (interview, March 30, 2018). *Chelvie* is much more than a food counter; it's an inviting marble bar set with a menu, silverware, and a wine glass at each seat.

There's a *shawarma* roasting and turning behind the bar, behind a young brunette pulling a draft beer from the antique, copper tap lines. The breeze and rays of light spilling in from the open entrance not far from one end of the bar make it feel like the best kind of old metropolitan, especially at *Chelvie's* round two-tops where diners are enjoy their *mezze* at happy hour. Diego owns the restaurant with his brother, Alejandro, and what really differentiates *Chelvie* from the many other *shawarma* opportunities in Buenos Aires is the sign because underneath *Chelvie* it says 'Lebanese Food' (yes, in English). Though there seems to be a growing affinity and consumer demand for Lebanese and Syrian food in Buenos Aires, *Chelvie* is one of only three restaurants I encountered in there that expressly presents itself as Lebanese, instead of the customary '*Comida Arabe*' (Arabic food). The brothers intentionally bypassed the stereotypical and commonplace trappings of Middle Eastern eateries—hookahs, gold lanterns, desert scenes occupied by men in turbans, belly dancers—in favor of making their restaurant a representation of who they are as a family and the unique flavors that their history brings to their food.

Figure 2.3 Chelvie restaurant sign at the San Telmo market in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Between my first visit to the *Catedral San Marón* and the preparations for *Dia del San Marón*, I also met Sergio at his CELIBAL office. Sergio describes CELIBAL as an organization and community whose mission it is to frame and communicate the Lebanese identity in a true and inclusive manner, and to put forth a non-political collective identity that encompasses many religions, origins, and lifestyles, but holds proudly and tenaciously to a Lebanese heritage. Sergio was born and raised in Córdoba, Argentina, by two Lebanese parents; his father and maternal grandparents immigrated to Argentina. At 23, Sergio was the president of the Lebanese Youth Organization and remained consistently involved with the Lebanese community in Latin America. He started CELIBAL about six years ago, after more than twenty years of working and living in New York with his wife, Marianela, a Lebanese woman born and raised in Uruguay also by two Lebanese parents. I met Marianela at the *Día del San Marón* gathering, at which point they invited me to their home for a meal and an interview (March 2, 2018). Sergio and Marianela are warm, intelligent, and enthusiastic about non-political work in Lebanese identity building. I spoke with them over a shared supper of their favorite Lebanese dishes prepared by Marianela.

In a conversation about how to broaden the scope of the present study, Sergio offered to distribute a survey to members of CELIBAL throughout Latin America. Table 1 shows demographic and historical data for the respondents of that survey. The responses to that survey have added a dynamic perspective to the present study and data that have contributed immensely to the concepts and conclusions herein.

The survey results are also central to the conclusions made and themes present in this study. Together with interviews, narratives, observations, and participant cooking, the study shows both the persistence of a 'national cuisine' (which I will expand on in Chapter IV) as well

as the continuum of emerging hybridization occurring in different localities. In a 2017 panel arranged by the Middle East Institute called "Food for Humanity," three panelists[10] discussed the ways in which food can serve as a narrative device as well as a means for cultural resistance and community building. I hope this study can be a valuable contribution to bodies of knowledge and research around immigrant foodways and the ways in which food can serve as an alternative narrative for diasporic people.

[10] "Speakers included **Michel Moushabeck** (Interlink Publishing) whose book, *Soup for Syria*, features recipes donated by chefs, many of them celebrity chefs, to raise funds for Syrian refugees; **Laila El-Haddad**, author of *The Gaza Kitchen: A Culinary Journey*, featuring the culinary legacy of women and men from Gaza as they relate to cooking, farming, and the food economy; and **Hazami Sayed** (Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture), whose organization is currently exploring cross-cultural exchange and the theme of displacement among Philadelphia's diverse communities, using food to bring people together and foster understanding. The discussion was moderated by creative consultant and producer **Honey Al Sayed"** (Middle East Institute 2017).

***Table 1**: Online Survey Respondent Demographic/Immigration Data**

	Residence	Age	Migrant Family Members	Origin in Lebanon
Sergio	Buenos Aires, Argentina and Miami Beach, US	55	Father and maternal grandparents	Father: Mjdel Meouch (Chouf), Mount Lebanon Mother: Bechmezzine y Tripoli (Koura) North Lebanon
Marianela	Between Buenos Aires and Miami	56	Father, around 1946	Father: Byblos, mother: Mashgara
Gisele	Mar del Plata, Buenos Aires, Argentina	28	Paternal grandparents. Maternal great-grandfather, early 1900s	
Angie	Ciudad de México, México	45	Four great-grandparents	Beirut
Milena	San Marcos Sierras, Córdoba, Argentina	25	Father, 1989	Baalbeck, Bekaa
Elvia	Santo Domingo República Dominicana	58	Grandfather and wife	Koura
Maria	S. Ant. de Arredondo, Córdoba	50	Father, 1948. Mother, 1960	Father: Ras Baalbeck Mother: El Las, Bekaa
Rafael	Merida, Yucatán, Mexico	43	Great-grandparents and grandparents	Hasbaya and Ebl is Saqi
Maria	Ciudad de Diamante, Entre Rios, Argentina	68	Four grandparents	Amiun
Habib	Merida, Yucatán, México	52	Paternal grandfather, maternal grandfather, early 1900s	Jounnieh
Juan	San José, Costa Rica	43	Grandfather, 1918	Hasroun, Bcharre. Northern Lebanon
Fernando	Bogota, Colombia	57	Grandfather, late 1800s	Baabda
Analía	Río Grande, Tierra del Fuego, Argentina	60	Father, 1936 + Three paternal uncles, 1914	Majd El Meouchy, Mount Lebanon, El Chouf
Jose	Tucumán, Argentina	35	Grandfather, 1925	Mahdel Mouch
Samira	Bogotá D.E, Colombia	60	Paternal grandfather, maternal grandfather, early 1900s	Baabda
Yamile	Ixmiquilpan, Hidalgo, México	18	Great-great-grandfather, around 1930	De Zgharta
Muse	Córdoba/Córdoba, Argentina	54	Mother and father	Baalback y Ras Baalback
Jose	Tepic, Nayarit, México	22	All marternal great-grandparents, 2 paternal great-grandparents	Zgarta
Elida	Buenos Aires y Resistencia (Chaco), Argentina	85	Father, 1913	Beirut
Yvonne	Bogota, Colombia	55	Grandfather, 1933	Bdadoun
Karen	Metepec, estado de México, México	41	Paternal and maternal grandparents	Ghazir, Bahmellet
José	Cd de México, México	65	Paternal and maternal grandparents, 1911 + Aunts and uncles	Beitt Mellet, Ackar
María	Tucumán, Argentina	39	Great-grandfather, 1880	Bcharre

**Respondents' surnames have been removed to provide anonymity.*

I am Lebanese, I am Argentine: Hybridized Identity

The Latin American *mahjar* made their host countries their homes – just as Italian, Spanish, and German immigrants arriving at the same time did – and their children and grandchildren (my informants) consequently identify as both Argentine nationals (or Mexican, Venezuelan, etc.) and as ethnic Lebanese. My participants and respondents recognize Lebanon as the site of their historical roots (nearly all of them can name exactly where in Lebanon their family came from) and navigate their family and personal life in a way that is aligned with their cultural heritage but are as assuredly Argentine as their friends and countrymen of European descent. However, as Ballofett notes, a critical gap exists in the scholarship of Argentine immigration history and social record (e.g., Nouzeilles and Montaldo 2002):

> Despite their pervasive presence in both urban and frontier spaces throughout the twentieth century, scholars of Argentine immigration history rarely dedicate their attention to these immigrants who hailed predominantly from the Syrian territory of the Ottoman Empire. Viewed from the perspective of Middle East migration studies, this is a major oversight – especially seeing as Argentina received more immigrants from the territories of current-day Syria and Lebanon than any other nation in the world with the exception of the United States prior to World War I. Thus, I find this work ["*Mahjar* Maps: Argentina in the Global Arab Diaspora," Ballofett's unpublished dissertation] to be fascinating both in terms of revising our narratives about Argentina as a "nation of immigrants," and also our understanding of the dynamics of the global Arab Diaspora, or "Mahjar" (Hoover Institution 2015).

Ballofett and others (e.g., Humphrey 2004) find that some immigrants did not integrate their Lebanese heritage and cultural practices into their new Argentine identity; instead, these immigrants came to (re)produce their Lebanese identity alongside their Argentine identity via cultural practices that existed within the 'respectable' margins of the perceived Argentine national identity (Anderson 1983) and an exclusionary social climate created by the dominant culture.

The Lebanese immigrants that arrived in Argentina in the late 1800s and early 1900s were a largely stigmatized immigrant group and encountered great pressure to assimilate in the pursuit of upward mobility and social acceptance (Humphrey 2004). Humphrey writes that "In

order to demonstrate their respectability and assimilation as Argentines, the upwardly mobile set up ethnic organizations to perform a supervisory role over conduct of 'their communities'" (2004, 36), and we can begin to understand how the cultural practices of the assimilated Lebanese became both deeply homogenized and necessarily creolized over time. The Lebanese in Argentina assimilated in terms of education, language, commerce, and social conduct, but Humphrey makes the important point that they sought ethnic respectability and not the total erasure of their ethnic identity. In this light, food and cooking provided this first wave of immigrants a safe space to (re)produce their identity in embodied, traditional practices by which their descendants came to know their culture and history.

My informants speak of their parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents arriving in Argentina intent on creating a new and permanent life there. These second-, third-, and fourth-generation Lebanese in Latin America embrace a hybridized identity that, as Hall notes, "lives with and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity.* Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference" (2004, 329). It is by that difference and hybridity, so often expressed and performed in food and cooking practice, that the Lebanese in Latin America have countered their assimilationist history in Argentina and sustained a distinct ethnic identity.

Because my informants 'learned' their Lebanese identity at home—largely in the kitchen and at the table—with their families, many position their food and cooking practices at the center of their ties to and understanding of their Lebanese ethnicity and ancestry. Observing their food and cooking practices brings into sharp focus the potency of food culture as an unselfconscious identity practice, and the way in which it allows my informants to (consciously) access emotional (not nationalistic) remembrances of and connection to their Lebanese kin. Cooking

alongside my participants highlights unspoken culinary habits and highlights a deeply embedded and continuously reproduced hybrid identity. Several examples in my observations with my participants in Buenos Aires illustrate this, but in an inconspicuous act of hospitality, Aida provided a quintessential example of (re)producing her hybrid identity through food and cooking.

When I arrived at Aida's house she had already prepared a lunch of *koosa mehshi* (stuffed zucchini), stuffed eggplant, and a fried zucchini-eggplant-egg mixture that is commonly made from the vegetable insides left over from making the aforementioned stuffed vegetables. Aida was aware of my study and had intentionally prepared Lebanese food for my visit, though our lunch included a preparation of pork that was more Argentine in nature. We drank soda with our lunch. After perusing photo albums and hearing her family's story, we began preparing *kibbi*. Eventually, Aida asked me if I drink *mate* - the ubiquitous Argentine tea made from *mate* leaves and consumed in a rather ritualistic way if consumed communally. A wide smile spread across her face when I told her that I love *mate,* an expression of her satisfaction at the idea that we share a taste for *mate,* one more affirmation that we are members of the same group. The two of us carried on preparing *kibbi* at her small kitchen counter while talking about her experience of food and family at home and sharing the *mate*.

Aida's parallel preparation and consumption of these two very specific and symbolic food practices—the sources of which are distinct and recognizable—epitomize her deeply ingrained hybrid and transnational cultural identity. As Rowe (2012) notes, "Preparing and ingesting two parallel meals suggests partaking in two spheres of life with different yet compatible meanings; it also suggests the ability to move between the two with equal familiarity and skill.... They create, in effect, two parallel and distinct identities at the same time and within

the same meal" (Rowe 2012, 221). Aida acutely demonstrated those "parallel and distinct identities" in both her instinctual combining of food practices as well as her self-identification as Argentine by nationhood and Lebanese by heritage. Each of these parallel identities hold different meaning and attachments, however, just as the *mate* and *kibbi*.

Aida's sense of identity as it relates to her Lebanese-ness is distinctly linked to memories of her family and to expressions of homage toward her ancestors, so food preparation (learned from and done with family) becomes a potent method of producing that identity. Her habitual consumption of *mate* demonstrates how she has absorbed the culinary and cultural practices of her parent's host country and the ease with which she moves between her two parallel identities.

Figure 2.4 Bulgur and onion ready to be mixed with meat for kibbi, with a mate alongside, at Aida's home.

I also drank *mate* with Mariana while we she showed me her hummus techniques and secrets. Diego recounted growing up watching the *carnicero* (butcher) of the San Telmo market fulfill orders to be made into the night's *asado* before returning to his grandparents' home in San Telmo for a Lebanese dinner. I drank Argentine wine with Sergio and Marianela while we ate *kafta* and *baba ghannouj*. Mari and Rosanna elected to make an array of Argentine sweets to

follow the distinctly Lebanese mezze they served at the *Catedral San Marón's* feast day celebration. In this light, food and cooking serve as the meeting ground of their two spheres of life, a place where they can honor their heritage and kin (or community) and simultaneously confirm their membership in the dominant culture.

Chapter III: The Home (and the Heart): Memory, Kinship, and Homage

What is notable about my study group, from a historical migration perspective, is that their memories and memory practices are connected to their familial history in Argentina and Latin America instead of an association with a lost 'homeland' as experienced by other generations of Lebanese immigrants. The participants in my study demonstrate a profound reverence for their ancestors' journey and resilience in building a life in Latin America, and a commitment to honoring their memory.

Kin as Homeland

In their paper "The Homeland in the Literature and Music of the Syrian-Lebanese Immigrants and their Descendants in Brazil," Moser and Racy (2010, 305) argue that "the homeland" is "perceived and represented differently. The various perceptions and representations, although historically coexisting and overlapping, seem to form a trajectory that roughly corresponds to distinct phases within the community's history." The authors go on to describe five orientations to perception of the homeland by the Syrian-Lebanese population in Brazil.

The reflective orientation, typical of that first wave of migrants from which most of my participants and informants descend, encompasses feelings of detachment, loss, and nostalgia for the "old life" in the "old country." The second orientation overlaps and succeeds the reflective orientation in the middle decades of the twentieth century. This changed orientation is recognized as a constructive orientation and is characterized by the homeland as a component layer of non-monolithic identity building that includes dimensions of Lebanese and host country culture. The interpretive orientation typifies the second- and third- generation immigrants in

Moser and Racy's study, whose "approach tends to be interpretive, experimental, and thematically selective," meaning that these generations self-select aspects of the homeland with which to identify, represent, or interpret (2010, 306). The fourth orientation, the diffuse, maintains the ethnic identity but plays on notions of authenticity and exoticism as performed by members of varied ethnic groups and backgrounds. Elusive is the fifth and final orientation, in which "the land of origin may lose its commanding presence and its role as marker of identity. It may be recalled from a distance in fleeting moments of self-reflection without attachment. We see this orientation manifested in second-, third-, and fourth-generation Brazilians of Arab descent, who express a loose or vague connection to the homeland" (2010, 306).

I find these concepts of orientation to homeland well-suited to illustrate each of my informants' connection to the homeland. The variation in their interpretations/enactments of these connections is demonstrated in the motives and meanings of their engagement in traditional food and cooking practices that I observed in our cooking together. As proposed by the authors, the fifth dimension aptly describes most of my participants' and respondents' orientation to homeland, presumably because they lack any lived experience in the country of Lebanon. My participants and respondents have learned their ethnic identity from their family members' constructive orientation and tend to (re)produce their identity from an elusive orientation. Instead of nostalgia for or attachment to the homeland, kinship and group membership are the predominant markers of identity for my informants, rendering food and cooking practice as an avenue to evoke memories of or cultivate an imagined connection with their kin.

That is to say, while the original immigrants may have been preparing home foods from Lebanon (and teaching them to their children) out of a yearning for their homeland or in an effort to maintain their symbolic connection to the homeland, their descendants are preparing those

same foods in an effort to maintain a connection with and pay homage to their ancestors—the original immigrants—as well as an effort to continue the practices and traditions learned from them as component and characteristic of their culture. Eves (2005) defines memory as: "a dynamic, evolving body of knowledge and stories that connects us to our pasts and informs our identity as individuals and members of communities" (2005, 281). In cooking the food of their ancestors, my informants conjure up memories and imaginings not of 'the homeland' but of Lebanese kin within the context of a remembered history or past in the host country.

Sutton (2005) writes that food memories, cooking practices, and material culture can fulfill emotional attachments to the past as much as to their place of origin. He argues that "similar processes can be at work in temporal as in spatial or spatiotemporal displacement," meaning the longing for a lost homeland can manifest in much the same way as nostalgia for a time past (2005, 309). Sutton's argument resonates with the experiences described by my informants, as cooking and consumption are processes of temporal displacement wherein they seek to momentarily 'return' (in their memory or imagination) to the past, with specific people, instead of pursuing a (figurative) return to the homeland.

Rowe argues that a "structured tie is made between Lebanese in the past and their descendants in the present. The house serves as a backdrop to the activity which structures the relationship: the techniques and consumption of food are what link relatives, and more broadly people of Lebanese ancestry, and make them the same type of people" (2012, 215). Because my informants–primarily second- and third-generation–were primarily born and raised in the Latin American countries where they now live, they engage in familial food and cooking practices primarily to cultivate and sustain relationships with their kin and community. Food and cooking

become the medium between past and present more so than between native country and host country.

Taste and Reverence: Expertise and Homage in Food Memory

I discovered two consistent trends in the memory processes of my informants born of the sensory experience(s) of cooking and eating: (1) specific dishes remembered in association with specific people; and (2) food production as a method of paying homage to a family or family member. In most cases, these two processes are happening at the same time – the motivation for or particular manner of cooking is an attempt to honor a loved one and/or emulate his or her revered cooking prowess, while the remembrance happens tangentially during production and consumption. Thus, aside from allowing a link to be made between the cook/eater and his or her kin, this memory specificity also acts as a mechanism for preserving family recipes and cooking methods. The enactment of those recipes and cooking methods enables the desired link to past and kin while also serving to establish identity, strengthen group membership, and simultaneously produce and re-produce Lebanese culture, specifically as it manifests in the case of their hybridized identity – both proudly Lebanese and decidedly of that place which their ancestors decided to call home.

To offer an example of the first trend, Sergio (survey response, April 25, 2018) writes: "In my case, everyone had their specialty. My mom the *wara arish* (vine leaves), my aunt *las sfihas* [meat or cheese hand pies], me the *kebbeh*, my father lamb brochettes, my mother-in-law stuffed tripe." 'Specialties' are common and consistent in most Lebanese families, a point that quickly became evident in my interviews and analysis of survey responses: 80% of my survey respondents named a specific family member as *the* maker of a specific dish. Interestingly, all of

the dishes mentioned are part of a culinary repertoire that I have outlined in Chapter IV. Though they are common in most Lebanese households, 'specialty dishes' become a powerful symbol of the person who made it best and a point of access to positive memories of them—memories recalled as integrated wholes by the very literal connection between our smell and taste systems and our brains' memory center (Shepherd 2012, 180).

Many home cooks will spend years attempting to obtain, figure out, or refine that person's recipe/dish, all the while conceding that the person from whom they learned the dish made the 'best' version (though the home cooks are perfectly happy to keep trying). Juan from Costa Rica writes, "the *chisbaraak* reminds us of our grandmother, who cooked it the best" (survey response to author, April 25, 2018). At times, it seems the impossibility of making a dish *as well as* that particular family member is a mechanism for continuing to engage in the memory process of that dish. On the other hand, Maria from Tucumán, Argentina (survey response, April 25, 2018), writes, "*kebbe*… Everyone says that it is exactly the same as my grandmother," which is the highest compliment a Lebanese home cook can receive and profoundly enforces the relationship/link between ancestors and descendants, past and present.

Mariana is not perceptibly Lebanese until she's in the kitchen. She prepares *hummus* almost effortlessly in her small kitchen while explaining her process for arriving at not just the most delicious *hummus* she can muster, but also the one that most closely resembles the *hummus* she grew up eating – no peanut butter, very smooth, drizzle of olive oil on top. Mariana is Argentine, but her description of the *hummus* was interspersed with memories of her Lebanese grandfather and a profound reverence for him. She describes the intersection of cooking practice and memory, and that sense of honor or homage:

> *I love it, and I also have so much respect for the recipes. I am a cook, and maybe you [also] like to play, invent… but not this [hummus] that I do - I read, I researched, it's not*

> *the same to me when it's made with peanut butter instead of sesame. In some way, I feel like I am honoring my grandfather in this, I am sure that he would love my raw kibbi, that he would love that I have a [kibbi] mortar here* (interview, April 2, 2018).

She expresses a deep fondness for their family table, where she and her family shared, learned, and (re)produced their Lebanese heritage and culture, and to which Mariana undoubtedly pays homage each time she invites people to her own table.

I will not delve into the restaurant scene or the *Comida Arabe* of Buenos Aires, as that is enough for an entirely separate paper, but I did speak to Diego (over a plate of *kafta*) about the menu and motivation for his restaurant, *Chelvie*. His pride in his work was palpable in his interactions with customers and attention to each plate. He spoke of the meaningful connection he felt with the market and he and his brother's contentment in finding a place there where they could share this food that they love. A closer look at the *Chelvie* menu reveals that it is *their* Lebanese food - the menu itself seems an homage to the whole family, containing recipes that reflect specialties of "…all the family. My mom in one sense, my grandmother in another, etc. But everyone has their little bit" (interview, March 30, 2018). I asked about the pastrami on the menu—not typically an offering on Lebanese menus—and he told me about the beloved aunt that used to make "lo mejor pastrami" (the best pastrami). It's on the menu as a matter of personal taste but also because it evokes a sense of their aunt, consequently re-producing their unique familial identity based on their own experience, knowledge, and memory:

> *Chelvie, which is the name of the restaurant, we chose it because that was my grandmother's oldest sister, and as I told you, there's always conflicts in Lebanon. She had life quite figured out. She was set to marry a doctor, everything very calm, and [then] her parents died. So, she became the person in charge of the eight siblings, among them my grandfather. They had to take refuge on a mountain and she came down to look for food to be able to nourish everyone - and she could not carry out her life as planned and ready. And thanks to her, the eight siblings survived, because she fed them, educated them, etc. We believed at a point that there had to be a way to make [the restaurant] a homage to our family. It's not something that's very pronounced anywhere [to our customers], I'm just telling you because you asked me specifically why we called it that.*

> *We have always loved the food, because we grew up eating this food, and it seemed like an internal family homage to give it her name* (interview, March 30, 2018).

The data from my interviews, discussions, and cooking with Lebanese people in Argentina suggest that my informants are not engaging in food and cooking practice out of a conscious effort to produce or mark their identity, though the strong tie to kinship and learned tradition consequently does just that. My informants perceive and experience their world(s) as an integrated whole for which the component parts include family, memory, cultural identity, traditional practices, and embodied knowledge. Food, cooking, and eating become powerful, multisensory triggers to the cognitive mechanisms that enable 'whole,' emotional, positive memories important to my informants' experience of identity.

Chapter IV: The Repertoire—Landscape, Standardization, and Change

> "Landscape isn't neutral, people bring their history to that landscape, their perspective, their knowledge, their experience, what they've learned about the world." – Fozia Ismael (Ox Tales, May 2018)

Landscape and the Migration of Totem Substances

Culinary products and ingredients have been moving between the so-called New and Old Worlds for centuries (e.g., Crosby 2003; Sokolov 1991), but the defining and persistent ingredients of a cuisine in diaspora are ultimately decided by ecology, access, socio-politics, and the perception of regional or national cuisine, as well as all of the aforementioned, intangible elements that immigrants carry with them in their migration. In Lebanese cooking in Latin America, we see the crossroads of two sets of totem substances from distinct but complementary landscapes and culinary cultures—the agrarian Levant and postcolonial South America. We have arrived at that crossroads by way of a number of transformative culinary processes that I will describe below and many years of acculturation by Lebanese immigrants into host societies. Zurayk and Rahman (2008, xvi) define 'totem substances' as the "foods that originate from the interaction of history, ecology, and geography. They form the cornerstone of the Lebanese food traditions. They are the alimentary expression of the landscape." Human and social history have introduced myriad non-native substances to every land, and the economics and socio-politics therein have elevated many of those products to be included into widely accepted lexicons of ingredients for a cuisine.

To illustrate how the totem substances of a 'national cuisine' come to characterize cuisine and demarcate culture and origin, and the role of food writing in establishing cultural markers as they relate to ingredients, Table 4.1 showcases and compares 'pantry lists' from two cookbooks (Hamady 1987; Holland 2014) published outside of Lebanon for non-Lebanese audiences:

Table 4.1: Pantry Lists in Lebanese Cookbooks Published Outside of Lebanon*

Title	***Lebanese Mountain Cookery***	***The World on a Plate***
Author	Mary Laird Hamady	Mina Holland
Year of Publication	1987	2014
Country of Publication	United States	United States
Pantry Items	Burghul (or bulgur)	Bulgur Wheat
	Chickpeas	Chickpeas
	Tahini	Tahini
	Za'atar	Spices (Allspice, Cinnamon, Za'atar, Sumac)
	Sumac	Fermented Yogurt or Sour Fruit
	Flower Waters	Yogurt (fresh and dried)
	Pomegranate Syrup	Olives
	Filo Dough	Pickles
	Pine Nuts	Broad Beans
	Pomegranate Seeds	Lemon
	Kishik	Herbs (Parsley, Mint, Tarragon)
	Faraykee	Sesame
	Dried Spearmint	Meats (Lamb, Goat,Chicken)
	Olive oil	Labneh
	Dried eggplant skins	White Cheese (such as feta)
	Semolina	

**Lists have been reordered from the printed versions to emphasize commonalities.*

Lebanese Mountain Cookery (Hamady 1987) contains recipes from the author's husband's Lebanese family members in the city of Baakline in the mountainous region of Lebanon. Hamady writes for an American audience and opens her book with a list of 'special' pantry items one may want to have on hand for the successful execution of the recipes within. The list offers valuable insight into the accepted 'totem substances' of Lebanese cuisine but also reflects the regional food and cooking practices of both her family in Lebanon and the Midwestern United States, where the author lived. Holland (2014) does make many of the same suggestions in her book *The World on a Plate*, but Holland's list differs from Hamady's in that it leaves out products rendered by very traditional processes such as *kishik* and reflects the ingredients most prevalent in the global impression of Levantine and Lebanese food—ingredients that are generally easy to find in contemporary Western markets.

The two lists together illustrate both a program of totem substances associated with the pervasive idea of Lebanese national cuisine and the way in which displacement of that cuisine from its origin renders distinct perceptions of the landscape from which it comes. These ingredients are totem substances of Lebanese food that are inextricably connected to the social and ecological history of the country and region combined with regional and familial food and cooking practices. The crossovers among these two lists represent a small batch of ingredients whose ecological and cultural roots we find in the Levant but are not necessarily widely available throughout the world, though their availability increases as steadily as the popularity of Lebanese food. These pantry lists and the following discussion are meant to elucidate the way in which written recipes, popular discourse, and social histories influence perceptions of 'traditional' foods by diasporic people and members of the dominant culture.

As an issue of historical access, omissions and modifications happen most regularly in the realm of herbs and spices that would have been and are imported products. Lebanese seven spice mix is highly popular in the kitchens of my participants, but *za'atar*, sumac, or any of the individual spices included in a typical seven spice mix are infrequently found in their pantries. Aida and many of my other informants named Damasco Market as *the* place to find typical Lebanese and Arab ingredients and baked goods. Damasco Market is a Middle Eastern market in the Palermo neighborhood of Buenos Aires, which hosts the largest population of Arabic speakers in the city. When I visited the shop, I found nearly all of the (dry) ingredients mentioned in the aforementioned pantry lists. According to the shopkeeper there, Damasco Market has been open for nearly sixty years and is the oldest Middle Eastern grocery store in Buenos Aires. My informants' ancestors arrived in Argentina more than sixty years ago, however, and it seems safe to presume that, without access to a thing like *za'atar* at the time of

their arrival, the quintessential Levantine condiment did not factor into their cooking and cuisine and, thus, does not necessarily play a prominent role in contemporary Lebanese cuisine in Latin America. As a result, while my informants hold strong to the dishes that indicate their membership in the Lebanese diaspora and community, the Lebanese home cooking of Latin America represents both a distinct idea of the national cuisines but has also largely taken on the same hybrid identity as the cooks.

Figure 4.1 A small jar of za'atar that Aida brought home to Argentina from a trip to Lebanon several years prior to this photo being taken. Aida keeps this jar of za'atar both because she does not want to run out of the spice and because it reminds her of her trip to Lebanon.

On the Notion of National Cuisine

Landscape is surely not neutral and, in moving from one to another, a number of processes occur that ultimately leads to both standardization and a new diversity—incited and affected by the ideas, perceptions, and allegiances that an immigrant group brings with them to a new landscape. Nearly all of my informants are able to name the specific town or city in Lebanon from which their family emigrated, but their food and cooking practices are not correspondingly specific or distinct. Instead, my participants' and respondents' perception of

traditional Lebanese dishes and cooking practices are aligned with their memory practices in that the authority is given to the family member from which a dish was learned. Despite the diversity of authoritative kitchen figures and places of origin, Heine notes that, "the recipes [of immigrant and descendent Lebanese] show an unmistakable Lebanese programme, with all those dishes for which Lebanese cuisine is famous" (2000, 143). Heine is speaking here about a 1957 Lebanese cookbook written in French by George N. Rayes. I have used Heine's words here instead of my own to demonstrate the pervasiveness of the "Lebanese programme" throughout the world and to illustrate the commonplace standardization of cuisine in diaspora.

The generic repertoire of Lebanese foods among the Latin America diaspora is a result of what Zubaida (1994) refers to as cultural standardization, with the production and consumption of the food serving as a site for the reproduction of a 'national' culture in diaspora. Rowe's data supports this theme in her research of Lebanese immigrants in New England:

> Though memories and occasional practices of such diversity survive, by and large a more generic and flexible "Lebanese cuisine" is the contemporary norm. Writing about a similar phenomenon—including shortcuts, hybrid use of ingredients, improvisations—among Indian migrants in the U.S., Purnima Mankekar notes that this procedure enables the reproduction of "culture" in the diaspora (1997: 204). Thus, we find that in Northern New England, diverse Lebanese techniques and dishes have collapsed into a general food category which everyone accepts and uses (2012, 223).

In light of this reality, it is worth recalling the supervisory entities of the early 1900s in Argentina —made up of the upwardly mobile members of the *mahjar*—in considering the lexicon of dishes that has come to typify *Comida Arabe* (Arabic food) in Latin America and beyond. These entities acted as the guardians of cultural representation at the time (Humphrey 2004) and it stands to reason that their own production and promotion of Lebanese foods served to standardize a lexicon of foods deemed appropriate and respectable for members of the newly arrived Lebanese ethnic group.

It is also worthwhile to consider the effect of cookbooks on the standardization and homogenization of Lebanese cuisine in Latin America. My participants and respondents consistently echoed one another in two claims which are pertinent to this topic: (1) they did not and do not spend nearly as much time preparing food as did their female (immigrant) relatives and (2) they prepare Lebanese food from memory, as taught to them by female relatives, but often use written recipes and cookbooks as references. I will dive deeper into the matter of knowledge transfer in Chapter 7, but the point I wish to make here has to do with the role of written recipes and cookbooks, in tandem with 'cultural guardians' and issues of class as they relate to cultural representation. The effect has been to collapse or confuse regional differentiations in lieu of presenting an all-encompassing national cuisine that fits into 'high' culture and by which the national culture and ethnic identity may be positively perceived.

Figure 4.2 "The best way to know a culture is to taste it." Cover image and type from the May 2015 issue of Afar magazine.

The idea of knowing a culture by tasting it may have been only recently articulated by food writers and travel enthusiasts but is a foundational concept in contemporary food media. 'Ethnic' cookbooks are presented and perceived as authoritative and authentic representations of a culture and, perhaps more precariously, of a nation (e.g., Appadurai 1998; Gvion 2009; Heldke 2003). The content of such books relies on the exchange of recipes across social classes and regions, the combination of high and low cuisine, and an "interplay of regional inflection and national standardization" (Appadurai 1988, 6). What these books tell us about a nation is dependent on and influenced by who is writing and for whom. Sobral (2014, 109) describes the phenomenon of cookbooks as generators of national identity:

> Cookbooks, which multiplied from the nineteenth century on – along with the press – were important tools in making cuisine a signifier for national identity. In constructing national cuisine, authors of cookbooks assembled recipes both from high and low cooking, with different histories, constructing what was aptly named a 'holistic artefact' (Mintz 1996: 104). And, if this endured, it was because writing afforded the possibility of learning and reproducing a corpus of recipes that transcended any particular place or region for being of the nation.

The "corpus of recipes" that emerges from this study's data has allowed my participants and informants (or perhaps more aptly—their relatives) to transcend their differences and distinctions in assuming a collective identity as "of the nation," as members of the *mahjar*, as representatives of the Lebanese culture.

Cookbooks and written recipes reinforce notions of authenticity, cultural identity, and group membership implicated in the prevalent Lebanese culinary repertoire (e.g. Hamady 1987; Abood 2015). Knowledge of the 'national cuisine' can communicate particularly powerful messages about national identity to diasporic people and function to signify and solidify group membership and enable participation in social initiatives based on collective identity. The shared familiarity and preference for the foods that Mari and Rosanna prepared at the *Catedral San*

Marón signified and solidified group membership among the guests. In fact, my own familiarity with the foods—learned from my family and my many cookbooks—during exercises in cooking as inquiry with my participants rendered the same affirmation of group membership and shared identity. This experience illustrates the effect and function of a generic 'national cuisine' for diasporic people who seek to make a connection with their kin as well as their community.

Figure 3.3 Daily menu at Chelvie in the San Telmo market in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The foods of the culinary lexicon, along with those which are included more sporadically, also reveal the transnational context of cuisine in diaspora and the hybridity of the cuisine's very origin:

> Of the Arab countries resulting from the break-up of the Ottoman Empire, the cities of the three countries into which Syria was divided [Syria, Lebanon, Palestine] display a degree of cultural homogeneity, sharing food ingredients and styles. In Ottoman

> times, Aleppo was commercially and culturally the centre of a region comprising southern Anatolia and north-west Iraq (the Mosul province). Their food is to the present day distinguished by common themes. One of these is the kebbe/kofteh genre: typically pastes of ground meat and bulgur stuffed with seasoned minced meat with various additions, including pine nuts [...] Also the now familiar repertoire of the Lebanese mezze tray of tabbouleh, muttabal and so on are mostly parts of the general Syrian repertoire, some of it shared with Anatolia (Zubaida 1994, 35).

Kibbi, which is mentioned by almost 100% of my respondents, is a powerful symbol of what my informants perceive as their culinary heritage. I prepared *kibbi* with Aida in her home, watched Mari and Rosanna prepare enough *kibbi* for 200 people, and found *kibbi* on countless (*comida arabe)* menus around Buenos Aires. *Kibbi* is the Lebanese culinary repertoire's mainstay and crown jewel, but also conveniently demonstrates how even the most quintessential of dishes (and socially accepted cultural practices) are inevitably adapted to a new landscape.

Table 4.2 Commonality of Dishes in Respondents' Answers to the Question "Which Lebanese dishes do you cook at home?"*

Most Common (>20% respondents)	**Other (<20% respondents)**
Kibbi	*Fatayer/Sfija*
Labne	*Falafel*
Warak Enab (Stuffed Grapeleaves)	*Kafta*
Tabbouleh	*Babaganoush*
Hummus	*Fatteh*
Berenjena	*Maamoul*
Fattoush	

**38% of participants live in Argentina, 33% in Mexico, and the remaining 29% live in Colombia, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic.*

In order for traditional dishes to live on in diaspora, ingredients must be available and accessible to some extent, modifications are inevitable, and the diasporic group must be interested in the preservation of those culinary traditions. Among my Argentine participants, I noted consistent transformations in food and cooking, though all of the resulting dishes are still touted as 'traditional' or 'authentic' because they are learned from the authoritative figures of a family (though sometimes recipes learned later from family in Lebanon come to replace those of their immediate family) and reinforced by written recipes and cookbooks. If the immigrant

cuisine is not integrated into dominant food culture (as Italian food has been in Argentina), the culinary repertoire that diasporic people learn at home with their families has been and must continue to be adjusted to fit the landscape. It is in those adjustments and modifications to ingredients of traditional dishes that we can see the effect of landscape, culture, and society on the food and cooking practices of the Lebanese in Latin America, and the resulting hybridization.

Creolization and Culinary Processes

Richard Wilk (2006) offers a helpful vocabulary in assessing the techniques of transformation behind culinary blending in *Home Cooking in the Global Village: Carribbean Food from Buccaneers to Ecotourists.* In an attempt to break down the transformative processes of cultural blending, Wilk uses cooking as a metaphor and identifies key processes that result from "the forging of new foods from old, the creation of cooking" (2006, 113). Blending, the first of the processes as described by Wilk, is the most basic and obvious transformation in which ingredients, dishes, and/or techniques are mixed or reordered (2006, 114). Several of my survey respondents reported that they often blended Lebanese household staples with everyday Argentine foods. For example, many serve *tabbouleh* alongside *milanesa* while others report that there is always *labne* or *laban* at home and on the table, to be eaten with simple, everyday meals from the food culture of the host society.

Submersion is a much less obvious transformation and distinct from blending in that an ingredient is literally submerged in another food or foods, rendering the ingredient unidentifiable (Wilk 2006, 115). This is not a transformation I observed much of with my study group, though many speak about seven spice mix as a household ingredient that they use for Lebanese foods but also submerge into soups, stews, and meat dishes that are not typically Lebanese. The

replacement of one ingredient for another is called substitution and, in the case of my study group, is most often the result of a lack of access to "correct" ingredients (Wilk 2006, 116) as well as an effect of the dominant food culture of the host country. There are two very prominent examples of substitutions that emerge from the data and my observations; the *tahini* in *hummus* replaced with peanut butter and the lamb in *kibbi* replaced with beef. *Tahini* can be hard to find and is quite expensive in South America, which likely explains the peanut butter substitution, but the substitution of beef in *kibbi* appears to be more a result of acculturation and adaptation to a new landscape and (food) culture.

Figure 4.3 Aida preparing kibbi in her home, with beef, bell peppers, onion, and seven spice mix. Aida cuts the kibbi in the traditional way and places small pads of butter on top to brown and moisten the meat.

Kibbi, as Zubaida simply states (1994), involves 'minced meat,' but most Lebanese cookbooks prescribe ground lamb as the traditional or preferred meat for *kibbi* (e.g. Hage 2012, Hamady 1987, Farah 1997). For example, Farah (1997, 59) states that "leg of lamb is the preferred meat in kibbi, but lean beef (such as ground round) may be substituted," while Hamady (1987, 193) offers two different recipes for *kibbi*—one 'traditional' and one meant to suit her Western readers—but both simply include "lean lamb or beef" as the meat ingredient. Argentina

has a powerful and deeply embedded beef culture and every Lebanese home cook I spoke to in Buenos Aires made their *kibbi* with ground beef. Lamb is a highly valued product in Argentina and an important element of their cuisine but more so in the Patagonian region, where it is most commonly cooked as a whole or half animal over open fire or as part of an *asado*. My participants all told me it is nearly impossible to encounter ground lamb at the *carniceria* (butcher shop). Thus, the ostensibly traditional preparation of *kibbi* in Argentina is a beef dish—a departure from the traditional—yet still presents the same potent symbolism of Lebanese culture and ethnic identity, and the recipes still fit the standard presented by contemporary Lebanese cookbooks.

Table 4.3: Kibbi Ingredients from Two Cookbooks

Cookbook Name	*El Libro de la Cocina Árabe*	>> translation	*The Lebanese Kitchen*
Author	Jorge M. Saba		Salma Hage
Year of Publication	2013		2012
Location of Publication	Argentina		London + New York
Recipe Name	Quebbe Bel Fern: Quebbe al horno en la bandeja		Baked Lamb Kibbeh
Ingredients	○ 1 kg pulpa para quebbe ○ 300g trigo fino ○ 1 cebolla rallada ○ Sal a gusto ○ Ají molido, canela y jamaica, cantidad necesaria	○ 1 kg ground meat for kibbi ○ 300g fine bulgur ○ 1 grated onion ○ Salt to taste ○ Chili pepper, cinnamon, and allspice, necessary quantity	○ 1 large onion ○ 600 g boneless leg of lamb, diced ○ 350 g bulgur wheat ○ 1 tsp seven spice seasoning ○ 1 tsp ground cumin ○ 1 tsp pepper ○ 1 tsp dried mint ○ Olive oil for brushing

Sergio admitted that he had grown up eating his mother's beef *kibbi*, but after a number of visits to Lebanon, had come to prefer ground lamb for the dish, though he and his wife still make it with beef when they are at home in Argentina. Many of my informants add other

commonplace local products of their home country to *kibbi*—like red bell pepper in Argentina or *chiles* in Mexico. Sergio's wife, Marianela, and Aida[11] both omit the pine nuts typical of the dish because good pine nuts, an imported product, are hard to come across, and good, *affordable* pine nuts even harder. In cooking with my participants and inquiring about specific ingredients, I discovered, unsurprisingly, that the imported ingredients seem to have been substituted or omitted from traditional recipes when their parents and grandparents arrived and are often not at all a part of their rendition or knowledge of a dish (until, occasionally, they read it in a cookbook or visit family in Lebanon).

For a food culture that involves a substantial amount of wrapping and stuffing, it is harder to see when the practices of wrapping and stuffing are used as transformative processes. Wilk described the effect of this transformation as "either to raise or lower the status or change the identity of either the stuffing or the wrapper" (2006, 117). *Fatayer* are a popular part of a Lebanese *mezze* and a common household food item, but in Buenos Aires, *fatayer* are alternately referred to as *empanadas arabes* and exemplify wrapping and stuffing as a transformative process in both directions. When Mari and Rosanna prepared *empanadas arabes* (they referred to them as such) for the event at *Catedral San Marón*, they used the same pre-made dough rounds that are ubiquitously sold in Argentina grocery stores as wrappers for *empanadas* but stayed true to the Lebanese recipe as they knew it with the filling. When I visited a very well-known, 45-year-old shop called *Esquina de Fatay*, the menu's offerings included both the Lebanese rendition of meat, cheese, or spinach, as well as the choice of a *fatayer* filled with mozzarella cheese and tomato. The latter demonstrates stuffing as a culinary transformation as well the new

[11] Aida's *kibbi* recipe is included in Appendix A.

diversity created in blending of multiple immigrant food practices (Lebanese and Italian, in this case) with those of the host country (Argentina).

On Hybridization

> *"In the Yucatán, curiously kibbeh [kibbi], as the locals know it, many people think that it is a regional food of Southern Mexico because it's sold in the streets by Yucatecan people. They combine Lebanese origins with regional Yucatecan appetizers, also here they eat habanero chile in addition to the chopped onion [in kibbi]."*
> *- Rafael in Merida, Yucatán, Mexico (survey response, April 25, 2018)*

> *"In the tourist city of Cartagena, they consider quibbe a typical plate of the region and they sell it alongside empanadas and stuffings that are unique to the region."*
> *- Samira in Bogotá, Colombia (survey response, April 25, 2018)*

> *"We mix it - rice with vermicelli and beans, potato kibbi with spicy chile...etc."*
> *- José in Ciudad de Mexico, Mexico (survey response, April 25, 2018)*

While regional distinctions coming from specific sites of origin in Lebanon may be lost in the process, we gain a new kind of regionalism/localization born of the hybridization of Lebanese food practices with the products and culinary practices of the host country/city/town that perhaps better represents the hybrid identity of its cooks. In the same way that cuisine is standardized to represent a nation (e.g., Appadurai 1988; Gvion 2009), cuisine may be hybridized to represent a new diversity born of the creolization of culture. Eves (2005, 288) notes:

> …[r]ecipes argue a specific communal identity. Foodway scholars such as Dorothy Lupton suggest that foods constitute a powerful form of community self-identification. She writes 'food is inextricably linked with group membership as well as kinship' because it marks 'differences between cultures, serving to strengthen group or national identity' ([Lupton 1994] 680).

In other words, we signal our group affiliation through food choices. In this light, it can be argued that the reiteration of a generic repertoire of dishes enforces a global, collective Lebanese identity and the production of that repertoire in Latin America deepens ties to Lebanese roots and

kin. At the same time, the hybridization of the Lebanese food of my informants' ancestors with the dominant food culture reinforces a distinct regional and communal identity for descendants of the Lebanese diaspora who are also well established as members of the dominant culture.

Chapter V: The Kitchen—Communication through Food Preparation

> "Our affection for loved ones is always made apparent on our dining tables, perhaps the best representation of our society—we are hedonists at heart, in the most generous of ways." – Pascale Habis (2014, 13)

People and cultures have unknowingly (perhaps knowingly in some rare cases) been participating in a complex coding of food and meals for centuries, wherein information about social relations, intimacy, and cultural structures can be extracted from the format, technique, complexity, and material culture of a meal (e.g., Anderson 2014). We use food to communicate our culture, our intentions, and our social relations. Whether a person is feeding their own family, arranging a meal event with a person they do not know, or entertaining guests in their own home, the planning and realization of that meal is carried out with a specific, if not unrealized or unconscious, design for what will be communicated through the foods, structure, and presentation of that meal (Douglas 1972; Levi-Strauss 2008). For my participants and respondents, the preparation of meals in their childhood homes—and the tools of the trade—conveyed and instilled a sense of familial connection, tradition, and love.

While cooking is a "universal form of human activity," the cultural environment we find ourselves in has everything to do with how the meal structure, cooking method, and presentation are executed and perceived. The inhabitants or hosts in that environment are affected by nature and culture—beliefs about the world around them in relation to cooking and eating, habits or methods that they have adopted from their predecessors, and often even the social class to which they belong. Of course, two households in the same cultural context may in fact exhibit very distinct versions of beliefs, habits, and methods. Furthermore, the person or people participating in that meal, particularly if they are coming from a wholly different cultural environment and depending how informed they are about the cultural environment in which they are participating,

may have inaccurate or disconnected perceptions of meal structure, cooking method, and presentation (Counihan and Van Esterik 2008). Thus, food and cooking practice, and its cultural representation and identity building, manifest in distinct ways dependent on personal/familial beliefs, habits, and embodied knowledge.

Time and Tradition

If the cultural environment within the Lebanese community [in Latin America] exhibits an elusive orientation to the homeland and nation but an attachment to Lebanese cultural representation on account of sustaining a connection to kin, then much meaning is made in the preparation of food. In this environment, food becomes not simply a marker of identity but a language of love and homage for my informants—for kin that came before and for the natural and chosen families of these descendants. In manifesting that love and homage in cooking practice, a correlation between preparation time and tradition becomes apparent in my data. For example, in conversations and questions about how often and for what occasion one household prepares Lebanese food, the same sentiment is echoed: the more time a dish takes to prepare, the more traditional it is. Samira in Bogotá, Colombia (survey response, April 2018), writes that, "Homemade daily food is very simple. The Lebanese plates usually are more elaborate." Thus, Samira distinguishes more traditional Lebanese food expressly by the preparation time. Conversely, 100% of my respondents claim to make Lebanese food as every day food, usually 2 or 3 times a week, though most of them name a few staples that make up the everyday repertoire—*tabbouleh, labneh, hummus*—which are added to daily meals alongside fare that is local to the host country. These everyday meals thus simultaneously qualify as both Lebanese and of the host country.

The special occasion, however, merits the production of the more time-consuming, 'traditional,' dishes, the dishes my informants don't typically have the time to make as everyday foods. It is these special occasions in particular, then, where food and cooking practice are most noticeably used to communicate love, family ties, identity, and group membership. Thus, preparation time demarcates tradition while also serving as a method of communication. On special occasions, for large family gatherings, and when Lebanese people invite non-Lebanese people over to share a meal with them, the table is set with Lebanese dishes well known to be time-consuming in their preparation. In this way, the food and its preparation become a method for communicating not just an individual or group's identity but also an openness and fondness for each person people at the table.

Material Culture

The correlation between time and tradition similarly is also evident in the material culture of Lebanese homes and kitchens in Latin America, and that material culture also possesses important communicative properties. Material culture has the capacity to communicate ideas about identity, kin, and the past, and often becomes a symbol for tradition and culture to those who understand, have inherited, or have memories of the same possessions. Sutton and Hernandez (2007, 68) describe kitchen tools as "memory objects that represent the past," if not also useful tools in one's home. The authors elaborate on the idea of kitchen tools as memory objects:

> …certain cooking tools take on the status of biographical objects, used to tell the stories of people's lives and their ancestors, as well as to prepare their daily meal. They also are decommodified, taking on the value of 'inalienable possessions' which are incorporated into people's identities and their sense of continuity with the past. (Sutton and Hernandez 2007, 67)

For my participants and respondents, much of this material culture recalls an era when women spent much more time in the kitchen preparing food for their families—the age that solidified the link between love and cooking for these diasporic families. Some of the tools are still used consistently in the preparation of the dish they are made for and some have been replaced by modern technology but remain in the homes of my informants as highly symbolic material culture. Each of them is used very specifically for one dish or beverage, and many of them have been passed down from other family members.

Modern technology has placed the customary *jidurn* (Rowe 2012) in a place of antiquity, for example. A *jidurn* is a large mortar made of stone and used for grinding *kibbi*, specifically raw *kibbi*. Many of my informants and respondents have or had one in their home, often inherited from parents and/or grandparents. This is a tool that, by all accounts, was ubiquitous in Lebanese households before the advent of the food processor. Though my informants are very familiar with its once very important utilitarian role in their family's cooking practices, it is no longer used to the same end. The relationship between *el mortero*, as my participants and respondents call it, and the production of *kibbi* is the ultimate example in the connection made between preparation time and notions of tradition or authenticity.

Though mentioned by many respondents, none evinced a desire to return to the practice of hand grinding ingredients. Nonetheless, the presence of the mortar (all of my informants refer to the *jidurn* as a *mortero*, or mortar) in the home is important. Many people go to great lengths to move or insert a kibbi mortar in their home, even though they don't intend to use it for its intended purpose. When pointing out the mortar in her backyard, Mariana said, "Over there is a mortar for raw *kibbi* and in my [family's] house we had one that came from Lebanon but it was impossible to move, and when they tried to move it, it broke, so it stayed at the house and was

lost." Thus, the *jidurn* becomes a symbol enforcing one's group membership and signifying individual identity and an acute understanding of traditional food practices, even as this form of traditional material culture becomes technologically obsolete.

Another example of traditional but now largely symbolic material culture includes the *mamulera,* or *ma'amoul* mold . This small wooden mold is used for shaping *ma'amoul* cookies and is commonly found in the home, but few respondents mention making *ma'amoul* at home, suggesting that its place in the home is based more on symbolic significance than utility. In contrast, a majority of my respondents mention having an *ibrik,* the small copper pot for making Arabic coffee (also known as Turkish coffee), in their homes and is used on a very regular basis. Lastly, most Lebanese home cooks also have in their tool kit a small corer used for emptying zucchini and eggplant to later stuff with a rice or meat mixture. The corer is not specifically Lebanese and is never used as a decorative element as are the other three tools I mention, but it is arguably the most frequently used specialty tool in their collections. In any case, the value of these tools, whether symbolical or practical, lies in the embodied knowledge of the culinary processes and gesture sequences (Giard 1988) involved in the preparation of the dishes for which each tool was made.

Figure 5.1 A small corer used to extract the flesh of zucchinis and eggplants for stuffing. Aida inherited this one from her mother, the use of which serves to represent the embodied knowledge she also inherited from her mother.

The innate sensory characteristics of the material culture of the kitchen present myriad triggers during cooking processes which involves the tool at hand—whether it is by touch in its culinary application, by sight as a remembrance of a particular time, process or person, or by smell, if it possesses such a quality. The multisensory triggers of material culture in the kitchen, in tandem with the embodied knowledge, gesture sequences, and muscle memory necessary for their use in cooking or as a memory object, allow each tool to act as a powerful connector to memory and the past. Sutton and Hernandez sum up the potent symbolism and potential of a simple tool:

> We suggest that kitchen tools, precisely because of their material durability can constitute dense objects; because *they last, and yet change with us*, they are neither ephemeral nor unchanging. Thus, they are, in some cases at least, particularly good vehicles to capture and objectify lives, biographies and shared memories (Sutton and Hernandez 2007, 68).

Mariana has a small *jidurn* on her patio. She explained to me that it is not her grandfather's original *jidurn,* as that one had broken in being moved from one house to another, but she had replaced it because (a) it is an important symbol in a Lebanese household and (b) her grandfather would be pleased that she had one in her home. The *jidurn* is a potent memory trigger for Mariana and is an objectification of her grandfather's life and culture, an important part of her biography, and a cue for shared memories with group members.

Figure 5.2 Mariana's jidurn, with burnt charcoal inside from being used the evening prior as a small parrilla, or grill, for an asado.

Gesture Sequence and 'Doing Cooking'

The preparation of any dish involves a specialized and specific gesture sequence and, in the case of people who have grown up with food practices that are different from that of the dominant culture, the preparation of food can become implicit memory (Kark, 2017[12]). Thus, the conjuring up of these memories by way of food preparation is not necessarily a conscious or intentional action (though it can be) but a byproduct of learning and witnessing specific food practices throughout one's life. In the process of what Luce Giard (1988) refers to as "doing cooking," the gestures enacted cue our brains to evoke emotional memories linked to the action and repetition of the gesture:

> Doing-cooking thus rests atop a complex montage of circumstances and objective data, where necessities and liberties overlap, a confused and constantly changing mixture through which tactics are invented, trajectories are carved out, and ways of operating are

[12] Kirk, Sarah. 2017. "Taste and the Brain." (lecture, Boston University, Boston, MA, April 10, 2017).

> individualized. Every cook has her repertoire, her grand operatic arias for extraordinary circumstances and her little ditties for a more familial public, her prejudices and limits, preferences and routine, dreams and phobias. To the extent that experience is acquired, style affirms itself, taste distinguishes itself, imagination frees itself, and the recipe itself loses significance, becoming little more than an occasion for a free invention by analogy or association of ideas, through a subtle game of substitutions, abandonments, additions, and borrowings. By carefully following the same recipe, two experienced cooks will obtain different results because other elements intervene in the preparation: a personal touch, the knowledge or ignorance of tiny secret practices (flouring a pie pan after greasing it so that the bottom of the crust will remain crispy after baking), an entire *relationship to things* that the recipe does not codify and hardly clarifies, and whose manner differs from one individual to another because it is often rooted in a family or regional oral tradition. (1988, 201)

The "relationship to things" to which Giard refers includes both the emotional relationships of one's memory and lived experience as well as an embedded physical relationship to the tangible components of the successful preparation of traditional foods.

The significance of 'doing cooking' in Lebanese home cooking in Latin America becomes starkly evident when it comes to recipes. All of my respondents who act as the primary cook in their household claim that they cook Lebanese food from memory, though several say they occasionally use recipes as a reference. Many of them suggested that it would be difficult to write or explain a recipe but that they could easily *show* me how to make any of their best-loved dishes. It is not necessarily the specific recipe that they characterize as Lebanese, but instead it is the 'doing cooking' of the dish that renders a dish traditional. The relationship of informants to their family and their family's food exists as much in the 'doing cooking' of it as in the dish itself. These recipes were learned by observation and repetition, embedded in their memories as a package of culinary prowess and familial connection. The gesture sequences and food practices that culminate in a familiar dish are part of their personal history, embodied knowledge, and individual taste, and only as a corollary do they serve to produce or (re)produce identity.

While visiting with Diego at *Chelvie*, I had the chance to observe Diego in what seems like a minor culinary process but offered much information about his approach to Lebanese food. Diego dropped a large scoop of *labneh* on a small plate before lifting the plate up to eye level to smooth out the strained yogurt and create a round well near the center. He then placed the plate of *labneh* on the table to drizzle olive oil into the well before sprinkling some za'atar on top. The care he took in each step of the process, and the way in which he rather lost himself in that process, suggests an embodied knowledge of what Diego perceives as the right way to serve the dish—likely the way he saw it done countless times in his childhood and the process (and aesthetic) which became implicit memory in his own cooking practice. I cannot say for sure if Diego experienced any recalling or emotion in the 'doing-cooking' of that small plate of labneh, but I can say he had a very specific idea about how the dish should look and be presented. Diego described that care of presentation to me, "Yes, for me presentation is very important, in fact I spend all my time here with the staff here that takes it out [to the tables]. I think that have to dedicate more [care] to presentation, it seems important to me" (Diego, interview, March 30, 2018). This example highlights not only the fact that the significance of doing-cooking lies not only repeated and observed gestures and cooking practice but carries into presentation and aesthetics as well.

Figure 5.3 Diego plating labneh and the dish as it arrived at the customer's table.

Chapter VI: The Meal—Knowledge Transfer and Skilled Taste

> *Much is lost now because we are all grandchildren and great-grandchildren [of the original immigrants] and if the recipes weren't passed on, it's lost. In my family, my uncle also cooks Arabic food but I'm the only one that keeps the flavor alive because I saw my grandmother [cook] and I grew up with her.*
> - Mariana, Buenos Aires, Argentina (survey response, April 2, 2018)

I will return to *kibbi* as a quintessential example of the theme of knowledge transfer here, as the many shapes and forms of *kibbi* require a learned and embodied familiarity with the gesture sequence required to prepare a traditional *kibbi*. The casserole style is the most common at home and the gesture sequence involved in creating the dish is unfailingly consistent and distinct. There is a very particular way to 'score' the *kibbi* that involves cold water, a knife, and one's own hands. The knife is dipped in the cold water, along with your hands, to allow it to glide over the meat (instead of causing it to bunch up where it is cut) in the process of cutting contrasting diagonal lines to achieve tile-like diamond shapes that will later be dished out as individual servings. Aida navigates this age-old technique effortlessly - a true demonstration of embodied knowledge and gesture learned from her mother and taught to her own children. In fact, this is something I learned from my own mother at a very young age, primarily by watching her cut *kibbi* in our home. This particular, skilled, embodied gesture sequence exemplifies the potency and importance of knowledge transfer within this group—these gestures are not easily communicated with written words (the recipes for which are so rarely written anyhow) and are generally learned by experience and observation.

When asked to share a family recipe, many survey respondents said they could more easily show me a recipe than write it down for me, which serves as further evidence of the primary means for culinary knowledge transfer in Lebanese homes being observation and

repetition. Mariana's above comment brings this concept to life in her assertion that she is uniquely able to bring the flavors of her family and heritage alive because she *watched* her grandmother cook. Knowledge transfer in the realm of food and cooking practice is dependent on all five senses, however.

Cooking, Memory, and the Senses

Vision has a great impact on our learning early in life in the observation of cooking practices but also plays an important role in the identification and evaluation of food as acceptable and/or 'right' (Blake 2001, 45). Sutton and Hernandez (2007, 75) write about kitchen tools, "They are both Maussian objects, personifying the history of individuals and families, and Marxian tools, shaping in their use the identity of their owners." Thus, the kitchen tools one uses in repeated cooking processes are memory objects not just in an emotional sense but also in a technical sense in that the tactility of an object may allow a cook to remember the nature of its use.

When I cooked with Aida in her home, she beautifully exemplified the multisensory experience of cooking and, wonderfully unafraid of speaking her thoughts as they came, the memories that its many multisensory triggers provoked. She uses her hands as her primary cooking tools and continued to squeeze the *kibbi* mixture together until it felt just 'right.' She later tasted the *kibbi* mixture to be certain that it also tasted just right. After scoring the *kibbi* in exactly the same way I described above and have observed in innumerable Lebanese homes, she placed it in the oven and set the timer that she'd wait to hear to remind her to check the *kibbi* for doneness. Though, like many home cooks, Aida does not rely on a timer alone to apprise her of

the dish's readiness but is instead hyper aware of the smell of the dish as it cooks, knowing well the aroma of its doneness.

All of these sensory triggers—surely engaging all of the five senses—occur continuously and in arguably random succession while she recalls to me her own biography—her childhood, her mother in the kitchen, the way her mother made *labneh*, dinner parties with Argentine neighbors in her own home, her travels, and each step of her cooking process. Anthony Blake (2001, 40) writes, "All our memories of food arise from its appearance, its odour, its taste, its texture and the sensations it gives in our mouths, and even the sounds made as we eat it: all five senses send messages to the brain which are stored and can be revised in our thoughts as conscious memories." Thus, these multisensory triggers render synesthetic food experiences that, in their synesthesia—or the stimulation of one sense by another, generate whole, integrated memories (Sutton 2005). As discussed in Chapter III, our memory processes are inextricably connected to our senses, which means that the full participation of the senses (whether consciously or unconsciously) is required in learning, executing, and appreciating any particular food practice in order to access or enable that memory.

Changing Trajectories of Knowledge Transfer and Diffusion

> *We learned from our mothers, but we've incorporated techniques and dishes that were not eaten at home. We are always innovating and adding condiments and new dishes. We do not have children but we love giving recipes and spreading Lebanese food among our friends.* – Sergio, Buenos Aires, Argentina (March 2, 2018)

Knowledge is imparted by the action of the teachers, gesture is learned through observation by the students. Growing up with a mother or grandmother who routinely prepares Lebanese food in the home begets a third or fourth generation descendant adept at (and probably keen on) preparing those same foods. However, as traditional techniques are replaced by modern

technology and time spent at home cooking steadily decreases (or the desire to spend time at home cooking decreases, particularly for women), we begin to see the change that Mariana mentioned in the last section – a parallel decrease in embodied knowledge among group members and a waning familiarity with the food practices of long-past ancestors or ingredients from another time or place. As a result, the transfer of knowledge within the group is left largely to those charged with or interested in cultural conservation. In such cases, that transfer of knowledge has extended well beyond the conventional/historical mother-to-daughter trajectory.

Within the Lebanese diaspora in Latin America, this preservation of recipes, food practices, and culinary culture is an important component of maintaining and communicating culture and identity within and beyond the group. The importance of food practice in the framework of what I am calling cultural conservation has much to do with memory and the senses. The transfer and diffusion of that knowledge to those who do not share the same memories takes several forms among my study group. In my data, I recognized three primary methods of knowledge transfer (and, consequently, diffusion) that take place: (1) parent/grandparent to child, (2) member of Lebanese family to non-Lebanese spouse (usually wife) and (3) employer to employee.

I have already partially described the parent/grandparent to child trajectory and stressed the importance of observation at a young age as well as the challenges of maintaining that avenue of knowledge transfer in the modern day. Of course, one can learn and become proficient at a cooking practice later in life, particularly if that learning is under the guidance of a person reared in a household steeped in Lebanese food practice, though the lack of lived experience and memory may change their orientation to the practice as a culture marker. The second method of knowledge transfer presents itself frequently in the frame of 'mixed marriages,' wherein the

spouse who is not of Lebanese descent learns to cook Lebanese food either for the Lebanese spouse and their children. In many cases, this learning is undertaken with a female family member—be it mother, aunt, or sister—of the Lebanese spouse (most often a husband). Circumstances of gender consistently present as female-oriented in this framework; most of my respondents report that a wife learns the home cooking of a husband's household from one of his female family members. This is most common among first-generation immigrants who are seeking to satiate their spouse's longing for or memories of the homeland. In this framework, food practices are modified, combined, and changed to reflect the mixture of embodied and learned culinary practice of the cook. These food practices are also learned as modes of communication – to communicate a love or fondness for another, usually a spouse, by preparing the food for which they have an innate taste and deep-seated emotional associations.

> *My grandmother did it out of love, she wanted to learn the food that her husband liked. She did not do it because my grandfather obliged her to or for much less, simply for love, to please the person that she loved and she did it for him.*
> *– Mariana, Buenos Aires, Argentina (April 2, 2018)*

Knowledge transfer outside of a kin relationship happens largely in the context of employment and the production of special occasion foods by those charged with or interested in the preservation of the culture (whether primary household cook or public position). Because of the time and skill required in preparing traditional dishes of the Lebanese culinary repertoire, special occasions drive the transfer of knowledge to family members and non-Lebanese group members alike, to ensure sufficient quantities of food are prepared that will also communicate and endorse shared history and custom. This trajectory of knowledge transfer occurs most often between employer and employee and becomes a powerful method for maintaining traditional food practices within the household as well as the diffusion of those practices into non-Lebanese households and environments.

***Marianela**: [My mother] taught her maid. She used to live with us. And the maid is still cooking Lebanese things, yes!*

***Giselle**: And she's Uruguayan?*

***Marianela**: Yes! But because she loved to cook, she was learning from my mom and helping my mom, also. I remember being at home and all these Lebanese people coming for lunch at home… I remember when I was a kid and my mom cooking all that food, all the things – the kibbi, the tabbouleh, all these thing – and for 20-30 people. So, she had the maid...*

***Giselle**: Was it a special occasion?*

***Marianela**: Yes. Because of the Lebanese Union, all these things, they would come. I remember [how] the table setting [would fill up]. I remember long tables and all these people. That's why she taught the maid how to cook - because she needed help!*

***Giselle**: But your mom was always cooking too? She just helped her?*

***Marianela**: Of course. So that's how the maid learned. And she loved to cook, also. The maid loved to cook. Because you have to like to cook to do all these things. And she's still cooking it! We go to see her and she's still making all these things at home. She likes it. She makes the grape leaves, you know? And the kibbi…* (Marianela, interview, March 2, 2018)

Much like Marianela's account of her childhood home cook, preparing Lebanese food in the kitchen of the *Iglesia de San Marón* alongside Mari and Rosanna is an excellent demonstration of this form of knowledge transfer. The menu for the church celebration had been drawn up by Mari and approved by the Church's lead priest, who is expressly charged with not only fulfilling the religious duties of head priest but also ensuring that the Church is a place where Lebanese descendants can connect with their culture and community. The same learning by practice and observation takes place in the church kitchen, though the transfer of knowledge between authority and learner is markedly different from the home because the learner did not observe the same process or learn the same preferences early in life. Thus, the learning happens without the lived experience, embodied knowledge, or skilled taste of one reared with the same

food practices and preferences. We can reasonably deduce, then, that the learner modifies or adapts the cooking practices to suit their own practices and preferences, as Mari and Rosanna demonstrated and described in our time together. In transferring this knowledge to members outside of the ethnic group, the practice of Lebanese food is diffused among the host country's population and, importantly, subjected to the modifications, combinations, and preferences that may further support the 'new (hybrid) regionalism' and diversity assessed in Chapter IV.

This framework is the most prominent instance in which I noted non-normative gender roles in terms of knowledge transfer – in the absence of a skilled female cook, and most commonly outside of a home, it is the men who teach Lebanese culinary practices to those charged with meal preparation. Special occasions also play a powerful part in breaking down conventional gender roles, however; my respondents consistently note that male spouses assist in cooking when large quantities of food are needed for a large gathering. In this light, we can see that putting Lebanese food on the table for special occasions trumps all other conventions or expectations within a family or group. In the case of the priests at the *Iglesia de San Maron*, food practices are learned by observation and participation at home in Lebanon and the priests become unexpectedly important players in the preservation of Lebanese food practices in the diaspora.

Thus, Lebanese and non-Lebanese people become important agents in carrying on the skilled practice of Lebanese food to the taste of experienced Lebanese eaters, as is the case with the employees and spouses, though they may lack the learned taste preferences (or have different sensory reactions to the food). As Blake notes, "We are born with some innate predispositions for taste – new born babies like sweet, but reject sour and bitter tastes – but preferences for the aroma of food appear to be learned in an associative way with taste and social occasion, and at an early age" (2001, 16). The taste for the food and know-how around *how* to eat it must also be

transferred in order to ensure or increase the possibility that any particular dish or practice will live on among the descendants of any diaspora. Sutton (2006, 88) poignantly elaborates on this concept, "…there has been relatively little research on consumption as not simply a creative, but a *skilled* process, involving judgment and the reasoned use of the senses."

When I asked Aida's granddaughters if they make Lebanese food at home, they suggested that while they had not continued their grandmother's food practices in their own homes, they had certainly inherited a taste for the food. Blake (2005, 46) describes this phenomenon: "We are born with some innate predispositions for taste—new born babies like sweet, but reject sour and bitter tastes—but preferences for the aroma of food appear to be learned in an associative way with taste and social occasion, and at an early age." Thus, taste and flavor preference are a considerable component of knowledge transfer and has significance for the developing taste for Lebanese food outside of the homes of Lebanese diaspora people. So, as a matter of cultural and culinary preservation, we arrive at a new era of food in diaspora that puts skilled consumption on the same plane as skilled production in which memory and meaning play an essential role in keeping these quintessential Lebanese flavors alive with each passing, changing, evolving generation of ever-more-complex hybrid identities.

Chapter VII: Conclusion

> *There was always room for one more at the table. In my family, everything happens at the table, you start having lunch and you end up having dinner without even noticing, and you were there at the table all day but not because you were eating, it's simply the language with which you relate [to others]. It's not very easy to explain, it's like a meal that is meant for sharing… I think it's because of the food, the connectedness between the food and the table. My family on my mother's side have many symbols and things with which I identify - a big table where there is always space for one more is very Arabic, very Armenian, very Lebanese* (Mariana, interview, April 2018).

Food possesses the power to unify people across time (as much as) space and to provide a framework for positive remembrance, kinship, and the preservation of tradition. Kinship is a marker of identity, but my informants are not necessarily motivated by the production or reproduction of identity. In this study, my informants, by engaging in traditional food and cooking practices, seek to forge or reinforce a connection to their kin. As anthropologist Richard Wilk notes, "Many studies have demonstrated that food is a particularly potent symbol of personal and group identity, forming one of the foundations of both individuality and a sense of a common membership in a larger, bonded group" (1999, 1). In this study, my informants clearly value their sense of community and group membership in both the Latin American and global Lebanese diaspora. In this light, understanding the context of their narratives, the way in which they self-identify, and the particular orientation to that identity is crucial to extracting meaning from their food and cooking practices. The bonded group of which they aspire to reinforce membership most often tends to be their own family, as they are well integrated into the host societies.

This study *is* about identity building in that group and familial membership are foundational aspects of identity, but what is more important is that this study engages with the way in which descendants of the Lebanese diaspora perceive and experience their world and the role of food and cooking in their connecting to the past, to their kin, and to their hybrid identity.

If we embrace the notion of a new diversity, it becomes plain to see the value in understanding the significance and development over time of Lebanese food in Latin America. Without fail, my informants express a sense of family, belonging, and sustaining positive memories as the prevalent motivators for engaging in Lebanese food and cooking practice.

I have focused on the specific, everyday ingredients, dishes, material culture, and habits through which my informants access memories of kin and a sense of belonging for two reasons. First, I believe the unique narrative of each of person is inherently valuable in embracing the dynamic existence of a significant population of Lebanese descendants in Latin America. These stories also challenge existing narratives and stereotypes about the diasporic experience, identity, and nationalism. The uniqueness of individual and group experiences has additional relevance for ethnic groups who are marginalized politically, economically, or culturally by dominant groups and ideologies. The Middle East is a part of the world that is largely defined by conflict; food and cooking practice are a compelling, important, alternative narrative (El-Haddad 2017), opening to examination and offering a wider, more humanistic, more faithful perspective of the experiences of refugees, immigrants, women, and children in diaspora. Narrative voices that belong to members of the represented (and/or marginalized) group can challenge stereotypes and misrepresentations induced by fear and a lack of understanding (Moushabeck 2017).

Second, this study presents an opportunity to recognize my informants' hybrid identity and hybridized culinary culture as whole, self-contained, and historically significant in the landscapes they call home. The intersection between the Levant and Latin America represented by my informants also exposes a gap in cultural, culinary, and social histories, one that does not yet acknowledge the diversity of identity that characterizes the Lebanese diaspora in Latin America at this moment in time that I hope this paper sheds light on.

The potential for future research is almost without bounds. In the context of Lebanese food and cooking practice in Latin America, and the creolization of culture and cuisine therein, I propose that future research may focus on some key areas of research and storytelling. We, as researchers, may work to decenter socio-ethnographic study of Lebanese diasporic groups from urban centers. In applying a similar model of research to Lebanese diasporic sites in other less urban and less populated localities throughout Latin America, we might come to better understand the many hybrid identities and cooking practices that demarcate Lebanese heritage throughout the contemporary global diaspora. e may also look at members of the diaspora who have returned to Lebanon and how their food and cooking practices have changed and/or influenced the food culture of the 'homeland' (I am told that *mate* has become popular and commonplace in Lebanon)!

Lastly, I will propose that, instead of lamenting the loss or homogenization of 'national' culinary culture(s), we attempt to embrace the new diversity of cuisine rendered by the creolization of cultures as a genuine and valid product of people whose identity is anything but singular. I hope to see more ethnographies and narratives centered around the Lebanese diaspora in Latin America to bring their existence and history on the continent into general consciousness and discourse, and to give the group who brought this beloved cuisine to the Americas their rightful place in its history.

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Appendix A. Recipes

Mariana's Hummus

1 cup chickpeas, soaked overnight, drained, and cooked
Olive oil
Tahini
2 lemons
2 cloves garlic
Salt
Pepper
Sumac

Cook the chickpeas until they are done and bitable, but not so much that they are mushy. Let chickpeas cool slightly but drain and blend in a food processor when they are still slightly warm from cooking. Transfer blended chickpeas to a mixing bowl and add tahini, olive oil, lemon juice, and garlic to the blender and turn on. Blend until ingredients just begin to come together, then quickly add a splash of very cold water. Continue blending and adding small amounts of ice water until you get a very smooth, almost fluffy texture. Stir the tahini mixture into the blended chickpeas with a wooden spoon. Taste and add more of any ingredient—usually lemon, salt, or olive oil—to suit your preference.

Spread the hummus in a shallow bowl/walled plate to serve. Create a swirl in the hummus with the back of the spoon. Drizzle olive oil into the swirl (so it does not drip off the edge/side of the plate) and top with a sprinkling of sumac.

Aida's Kibbi

1 pound of ground beef
1 cup dry bulgur, soaked for one hour and drained very well
1 medium white onion, chopped in a food processor
1 red bell pepper, chopped
Lebanese Seven Spice Mix
Salt
Pepper

Drain the chopped onion very well by squeezing the liquid out with your hands. Combine all ingredients and mix with your hands until well combined. Test for seasoning, add more to taste.

Press the mixture into a baking dish that is at least 2 inches deep. Wet your hands with cold water periodically to prevent the mixture from sticking to your hands. Keep pressing until you've created a rather dense, thick, and paste-like layer. Use a butter knife dipped in cold water to cut equidistanct diagonal shapes across the pan, beginning at one corner and cutting through to the mid-way point of one side of the pan. Match that line about 2 inches apart on the whole dish. Repeat the process starting at the next corner *of the short side of the pan* to create several small diamond-shaped pieces. Continue wetting the knife as you cut to prevent sticking.

Bake at 350° for about 45 minutes or until it's turned brown and smells done!

Mari and Rosanna's Fatayer

Catedral de San Marón, Buenos Aires, Argentina

1 dozen rounds of empanada dough
butter
chopped onion
spinach or chard
ground beef
seven spice mix

Keep the *empanada* rounds in the refrigerator until you are ready to assemble the fatayer. This recipe contains ingredients for two, separate kinds of fatayer–one with greens and one with meat. Cook the filling before preparing to assemble. Sauté your chopped onions in butter until soft and translucent. Add seven spice mix and stir to incorporate and toast the spice. Add greens or ground beef to the pan and sauté until the greens are soft or the meat is just beginning to brown.

Place the cold empanada rounds on a cold surface, about six at a time. Scoop 1 heaping tablespoon into the center, or enough to fill just the eye—like an egg yolk. To shape the fatayer into a triangle, imagine three edges of your circle. Pull one, half-moon edge over the filling, wet the rest of the edge with a bit of water and pull the second half moon over the filling and the edge of the first fold. Finish by folding in the (wetted) final edge to create the three points of the triangle. Place on a lightly greased baking sheet and bake at 350° until the dough begins to golden. Checking that the bottom of each round is quite golden is a good way to know they're done.

Elida's Kafta
Buenos Aires y Resistencia (Chaco), Argentina

500g ground beef
onion, chopped
parsley, de-stemmed and chopped
mint, chopped
1 egg
salt and pepper

Drain the finely chopped onion with salt. Then rinse it, mix it with the meat, the egg, parsley, and mint. Season [to your taste]. Mix everything well and form into flattened meatballs. Cook on the grill or a very hot oven. Serve with salad.

Angies's Simple Keppe Crudo (Raw Kibbi)

Mexico City, Mexico

½ cup bulgur #1 (soaked in water for 3 hour, then drained well)
½ kilo of ground meat
Cumin
Salt
Baharat (*Pimienta árabe)*

Mix everything together [very thoroughly] with your hands until everything comes together [to form a sort of paste]. [Serve cold.] So I quickly get a dish full of protein and highly nutritious carbohydrates.

Miguel's Caldo de Pata, Mondongo, Verde, Garbanzo y Manì
(Cow Feet Soup with Tripe, Greens, Chickepeas, and Peanuts)

Pasaje, Provincia de El Oro, Ecuador

Cow feet
Tripe
Greens
Chickpeas
Peanuts, soaked and blended in milk
Mint, chopped

"This irresistible soup begins with cooking the cow feet and tripe, then adding the chickpeas and later, the greens and the peanut (blended with milk). To finish, sprinkle chopped mint on top. In the end, it's the sum of local ingredient plus chickpeas and mint!"
- Miguel (survey response,

Jacky's Knefe
contributed by Samira

Bogotá D.E., Colombia

"*Jacky is my sister and prepares the best knefe that I have eaten in Colombia."*
- Samira (survey response,

1 pound coarse wheat semolina
½ pound unsalted butter
1 liter of milk
1 teaspoon of sugar
2 cinnamon sticks

1 teaspoon of orange blossom water
1 pound of grated mozzarella cheese for the filling
Simple syrup flavored with orange blossom

Melt half of the butter. Add milk. Add the sifted semolina. Add cinnamon and orange blossom water. Cook on a low heat stirring constantly. Allow to dry until a dough forms that comes off the pot. Let stand for half an hour
Add the remaining butter and knead
Place a layer of not very thick dough in a heat resistant pan
Place [a thin layer of] grated mozzarella cheese
Cover with another layer of dough
Bake until the cheese melts
Bathe with the syrup [before serving]
Serve very hot

Marianela's Namoura

Marianela*: So I make two bags [of semolina] like this one in a pan like this, you put this in a bowl, and then you have to melt the butter, 200g. I'm thinking in... Because in...*
Sergio*: 200g? 8oz.*
Marianela*: Yeah, because when I go to the US and I make this, I buy it...*
Sergio: 8oz is 200g. This is like 18oz.
Marianela*: No, but I buy two of these bags.*
Sergio: OK.
Marianela*: Two of these bags. Then you melt 200g - for one kilo, one kilo is two of these [bags] - you need 200g of butter, melted. I melt it in the microwave. The you mix it with your hands, then put one cup of sugar, then 3T of baking powder, then you have - the milk, it has to be like lukewarm, not warm-warm but not cold. I put it in the microwave, like, 50 seconds or something, And then you start adding that milk and mixing that thing. I know when it's ready when you turn the bowl like this and the dough comes [away] from the bowl. And then you out it in the pan and then with a knife you start, like, making, you start, like, cutting this thing, this dough, like this, in slices, and then like this.*
Giselle*: Almost like kibbi.*
Marianela*: Yes. Then, when you start making this, the nammoura, you have to put the syrup.*
Giselle*: Before you bake it?*
Marianela*: Yes. Because the syrup has to be ready when this thing is ready from the oven.*
Giselle*: Oh, I see.*
Marianela*: The syrup is, like, one kilo, I think.*
Sergio*: One kilo is a little bit less than 2#.*
Marianela*: A little bit less than one kilo, I think. Like 900g of sugar in a pan and you cover it with water. Cover it, like, put a little bit more. You cover it with water and you add a little bit more water. You put it on the stove and start boiling, then you have to try - you know how to make syrup? Then you put the spoon and it makes, like, the... So, it's ready and you take it from the stove and add this, the orange blossom. I put, like...*
Giselle*: A capful?*

Marianela*: A capful, like, 9 or 10. Into the syrup, you mix it, then you pour it when this is hot. You take it from the oven, it's hot, then you start pouring the syrup that is hot also and you see that start absorbing the syrup. But at one point, the syrup stays there. You see it's going to stay there, is it going to absorb? But you wait a little bit, eventually, it starts absorbing and you add more. But this time, for example, I didn't put the whole syrup. I realized that it was enough and I [thought] it was fine. I left in the pan, like, a little bit like this, and I throw it away. Sometimes it's too much, I don't like it too sweet.*
Giselle*: It's perfect.*
Marianela*: And then, I make it the day before I am going to eat it. It's better.*
Giselle*: It sets a little.*
Marianela*: Yeah.*
Giselle*: That makes sense, it seems like it might fall apart, it's so syrup-y.*
Marianela*: That's why you have to wait the whole night [for it] to stay there, cover it.*
Giselle*: You keep it cold or just on the counter?*
Marianela*: On the counter, I cover it with something, like, once it's [cooled], with a film, I cover the pan. let it stay until the next day. Ah! And then I put the almonds. When I am going to bake it, before baking it, you put the almonds. One in each square. Then, because you marked the squares, sob then you cut it and you put it like that.*

Appendix B: Interview Questions

[SPANISH]

Historia Personal y Familiar

¿Cuál es su nacionalidad?
¿Su etnicidad?
¿De dónde son?
¿Qué parte del Líbano es su familia?
¿Cuándo usted o su familia emigran a Argentina?
¿Por qué usted o su familia emigran a Argentina?
¿Su inmigración fue voluntario o involuntario?
¿Tienen ganas de volver algún día al Líbano o prefieren quedarles acá en Argentina?

La Gente

¿Quién vive en esta casa?
¿Quién cocina los alimentos a diario?
¿Quién cocina la comida para ocasiones especiales?
¿Juntan o invitan amigos libaneses a su casa para comer comida libanesa?
¿Invitan amigos argentinos a venir a su casa para comer/compartir su comida libanesa?

La Comida

¿Cuáles son las diferencias entre los alimentos que se preparan a diario y la comida preparado por las ocasiones especiales (ingredientes, métodos, sabores, presentación)?
¿Qué tipo de alimentos libanés cocinar en casa y con qué frecuencia?
¿A cocinar se hacen sentir más conectado a su cultura o el Líbano?
¿Cómo es la comida que se cocine en casa diferente de la comida libanesa servida en los restaurantes acá?
¿Le diría que usted cocine más comida libanesa o argentina en su casa?
¿Piensan que sus tradiciones culinarias libanesas han mezclado con la cultura de comida de Argentina y en qué manera?
¿A casa y también sus percepciones afuera de la casa?

Los Rituales de la Casa

¿Adónde comen?
¿En qué tipos de rituales o hábitos de la cocina hacen Uds.?
¿Hacen platos particulares para días o ocasiones particulares?
¿Cómo difieren de su comida diaria esos platos?

ESTUDIO OBSERVACIONAL
(esos no son preguntas para mis sujetos, solamente cosas de pensar durante mi visita)

Entorno

¿Donde está la cocina?
¿Cómo se sitúa en relación al resto de la casa?
¿Dónde está el comedor?
¿Hay varias zonas de comedor?
¿Adónde comen la familia regularmente?
¿Es diferente para las ocasiones especiales?

La Gente

¿Que hace la cocción?
¿Quien está en el kitchenspace?
¿Quien está observando la kitchenspace?
Los ayudantes: preparación de adquisición de alimentos

Alimentos

¿Qué estamos haciendo?
¿Hay una receta seguida o está hecho la comida por memoria?
¿Usan mediciones o no?

[ENGLISH]

History

Where are you from?
What part of Lebanon is your family from?
When did you or your family migrate to Argentina?
Why did you or your family migrate to Argentina?
Was the move voluntary or involuntary?
What is your nationality? Ethnicity?
Is it your wish to return to Lebanon someday or would you prefer to stay in Argentina?

People

Who lives in the home?
Who cooks?
Do you have Argentina friends that come over and eat Lebanese food?

Food

What sort of Lebanese food do you cook at home and how often?
How is the food you cook at home different from Lebanese food served in restaurants?

Are there differences in the foods you prepare on a daily basis vs special occasions (ingredients, methods, flavors, presentation)?
Would you say that you cook more Lebanese or Argentine food at home?
In what ways has your Lebanese culinary tradition mixed with the local food culture?

Rituals

Where does the family eat?
What kinds of ritual meals or ceremonies do you participate in?
Do you make particular dishes for special occasions? How do those dishes differ from your everyday fare?

Arabic Food in BA

Do you know of Lebanese restaurants in BA? Do you ever eat at them?
I've noticed that Syrian and Lebanese food is often perceived as the same or grouped together here – do you think they are the same or, if not, what are the main differences between the two?
Do you think those differences are represented in the Middle Eastern food in BA?
How would you characterize the relationship between Middle Eastern cuisine and Jewish cuisine? People?

OBSERVATIONAL FOCUSES

Environment

Where is the kitchen? How is it situated in relation to the rest of the house?
Where is the dining area? Are there multiple dining areas? Where does the family eat? Everyday v. special occasion?

People

Who does the cooking?
Who is in the kitchenspace?
Who is observing the kitchenspace?
Helpers
Food acquisition v. preparation

Food

What are we making?
Is there a recipe being followed?
Measurements or lack thereof

Appendix C: Online Survey

[SPANISH]

¡Gracias por participar en este proyecto sobre la comida libanesa en América Latina! Si tiene preguntas, estoy a disposición - me puede escribir en esta página. Todos los participantes van a recibir noticias y actualizaciones de cómo se desarrolla el proyecto.

Un objetivo es saber las experiencias de diferentes generaciones. Si tiene padres, abuelos, hijos, u otra familia que puede participar también, por favor pásele este link.

Muchísimas gracias!

Por favor, complete el siguiente formulario y pulse 'Enviar.' Solamente necesita responder a las preguntas que desee. ¡Gracias!

SOBRE USTED

Nombre *
Contacto (privacy)
Correo, Teléfono, o Ambos, respetamos a su privacidad siempre
¿Adónde vive?
Por favor, incluya ciudad/pueblo + estado + país.
¿Adónde nació?
¿Cuál es su(s) nacionalidad(es)?
¿Cuál es su etnicidad?
¿Cuál es su edad.?

LA HISTORIA CORTA DE SU FAMILIA

¿Quién en su familia emigró desde el Libano?
¿Cuándo fue esta emigración?
¿De qué parte o región del Líbano es su familia?
¿Por qué usted o su familia emigró desde Líbano?
¿Ha vivido en o visitado el Líbano? ¿Por cuánto tiempo o cuantas veces?

LA COMIDA

¿Preparan comidas libanesas en su casa y con qué frecuencia?
¿Cuáles platos libaneses cocinan en casa?
¿Usa recetas o cocina la comida libanesa de memoria?
¿Por qué Ud. cocina comida libanesa?
¿Hacen platos Libaneses para días u ocasiones especiales?
e.g. Pascua, Navidad, Año Nuevo, cumpleaños >> ‘holidays’ instead of naming Christian holidays

¿Cómo difieren de su comida diaria a esos platos?
¿Quién le enseño o como aprendió a cocinar comida libanesa? Si tiene hijos: ¿Va a enseñar o ha enseñado a sus hijos a cocinar comida libanesa?
¿La comida que cocina hoy es diferente de la comida que cocinaban sus padres o abuelos? ¿En casa afirmativo, en que difiere?
Por favor, sea especifico con platos o ingredientes específicos.

COCINA LIBANESA

¿Hay ingredientes que quiere usar en la comida libanesa pero no puede conseguirlos a donde vive? ¿Cuáles? ¿Cómo los consigue o los reemplaza?
¿Intercambia recetas o ingredientes con parientes en el Libano?
¿La comida que come o cocinan sus parientes en el Libano es diferente de la comida que se cocina en su casa?
¿Tienes platos o recetas que se recuerden a alguien o a un recuerdo específico?
¿Que siente cuando cocina o come comida libanesa? *

SU CASA
¿Quienes viven en su casa?
¿Quién prepara la comida a diario?
¿Qué cocina más - comida libanesa o la comida del lugar adonde vive?
¿Cocina comida libanesa para Ud. solo/a?
¿Qué platos cocina para Ud. solo/a?
¿Quién cocina la comida para ocasiones especiales?
¿Cocina solo/a o juntos/as con otros en su casa? ¿Eso cambia con la comida a diario y la comida especial?
¿Hay maneras de cocinar o comer asociadas con su cultura libanesa o su familia en particular?
E.g. una manera particular de preparar o presentar kibbi, comer el mezze con el pan directamente del plato
¿Hay elementos o herramientas en su cocina que se utilizan específicamente en la comida libanesa?
Por ejemplo: un ibrik para preparar el café árabe, platos especiales para presentar la comida, cositas o recuerdos de sus parientes, etc.
¿Se juntan o invitan a amigos libaneses a su casa para comer comida libanesa? ¿Invitan amigos que no son libaneses a venir a su casa para comer/compartir su comida libanesa?
¿También, muestra a amigos que no son libaneses como comer la comida en alguna manera o le preguntan como le gusta comerlo?

LOS RESTAURANTES

¿Come en restaurantes libaneses?
¿Cuál es la diferencia entre la comida que se cocina en casa de la comida libanesa servida en los restaurantes adonde Ud. vive?

¿Difiere la comida libanesa en un restaurant de su ciudad de la de otros países? ¿Cómo compara la comida libanesa en un restaurant de su país con respecto a la de un restaurant en el Líbano?
¿Piensan que sus tradiciones culinarias libanesas han mezclado con la cultura de comida de su ciudad/pueblo y en qué manera? ¿Cómo han mezclado afuera de la casa (en los restaurantes, panaderías, y mas)?
¿Cuál es su reacción ante un menú de comida libanesa en un restaurante que se describe como comida árabe o de medio oriente?

EL CONOCIMIENTO DE LA COMIDA LIBANESA EN SU LUGAR
¿Cómo compara el conocimiento de la comida libanesa en actualidad en relación al pasado? ¿A qué se debe este cambio?
¿Cómo compara la popularidad de la comida libanesa con la de otras comidas étnicas? e.g. comida india, africana, tailandesa, persa, escandinava

COMENTARIOS

¡Este es un espacio para algo más que quiere decir!
Una historia, un detalle interesante de Ud. o su familia, cualquier cosa.

RECETAS

¿Ud. puede compartir una(s) receta(s) especial(es) de su familia?
No usaremos o publicaremos su receta sin su permisión. Si usamos la receta en alguna manera (con su permisión), siempre lo publicaremos con su nombre.

Por favor, explíquelo.

[ENGLISH]

Thank you for your participation in this project about Lebanese identity and home food! If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach me at on the contact page on this website. If you choose to include your contact information below, you'll receive news and updates from me about the projects development and an invitation to participate in any future research and events.

One objective of the project is to know the experiences of multiple generations of Lebanese people. Thus, if you have parents, grandparents, children, or any other family or friends who might like to participate, please pass this on to them!

Shukran. Thank You. Gracias.

Giselle

Please complete the following form and press send when you are finished. You only need to answer the questions that you'd like to answer.

YOU

Name
Contact
We will always respect your privacy.
Where do you live?
Please include city or town + state + country
Where were you born?
What is/are your nationality/ies? What is/are your ethnicity/ies?
How old are you?

A SHORT HISTORY OF YOUR FAMILY

Who in your family immigrated from Lebanon and when?
What part or region of Lebanon is your family from?
Why did you or your family immigrate from Lebanon?
Have you ever lived in or visited Lebanon? If so, for how long and/or how many times?

FOOD

Do you make Lebanese food at home and how often?
What Lebanese dishes do you make at home?
Do you use recipes or do you cook from memory?
Who taught you to cook Lebanese food or how did you learn? If you have/will have children, have you or will you teach them to cook Lebanese food?
Do you make particular Lebanese foods for special occasions? (e.g. holidays, birthdays, new year)
How do the dishes you make for special occasions differ from everyday foods?
Is the Lebanese food you cook now different from the food your parents or grandparents (or other relatives you grew up with)? If so, how?

LEBANESE FOOD

If you have relatives in Lebanon, how does the food they make in Lebanon differ from the food you make at home?
Do you exchange recipes or ingredients with relatives in Lebanon?
Are there specific ingredients for Lebanese dishes that you cannot find where you live? If so, what are the? How do you find them or do you substitute with other ingredients?
In what way have you mixed your Lebanese food traditions and culture with the food traditions and culture where you live?
If you are of mixed heritage (e.g. one Lebanese parent and one parent of different heritage), how have the foods of your mixed heritage influenced your cooking and/or in what way were/are they

mixed in your home? (e.g. your family makes both turkey and stuffed grapeleaves on Thanksgiving)
Why do you cook Lebanese food at home or why is it important to you?

YOUR HOME

Who lives in your home?
Who prepares the daily food in your home?
What do you cook more – Lebanese food or food that is more typical of where you live?
Do you ever cook Lebanese food just for yourself? If so, what do you make?
Who cooks food for special occasions?
Does the person who cooks usually prepare food by themselves or are there multiple people involved in the cooking/preparation?
Do you have particular ways of cooking or eating that are associate with your Lebanese heritage and/or your family in particular? (e.g. do you always make kibbi in the same, particular way? Do you eat mezze with your hands or bread directly from a shared plate?)
Do you have things in your kitchen that you use specifically for Lebanese food? (e.g. an ibrik for Arabic coffee, particular plates for serving food, décor or memorabilia associated with your family or Lebanon)
Do you ever invite Lebanese friends over to eat Lebanese food with you? Do you invite friends who are not Lebanese to join you for Lebanese food? (Also, do you ever have to show these friends or explain to them how to eat a particular dish, or do they ask how you like to eat it?)

RESTAURANTS

Do you eat in Lebanese restaurants?
What is the difference between the Lebanese food you cook at home and the food served in Lebanese restaurants where you live?
How has Lebanese food culture influenced or mixed with the local food culture and vis-versa, if at all?
Is the Lebanese food in restaurants where you live different from Lebanese food in different cities or countries where you have traveled? If you have traveled to Lebanon, how is the Lebanese food in restaurants where you live different or similar to the food in restaurants in Lebanon?
What is your reaction when you go to a Lebanese restaurant that presents itself as 'Middle Eastern' (instead of specifically Lebanese)? How do you feel when you find Lebanese ingredients and dishes on menus of restaurants that are neither Lebanese of Middle Eastern?

How well known is Lebanese food where you are now and how does that compare to years past?
If awareness or popularity of Lebanese food has changed over the years, why or how do you think that has happened?
How would you compare the popularity of Lebanese food where you live to other ethnic foods?

COMMENTS

A space for anything else you'd like include, be it a story about your family, more thoughts on food, anything,

RECIPE

If you'd like please share a recipe(s) with us for Lebanese dishes that you make frequently or that makes you feel at home. (We will never publish or use this recipe without your permission or without your name)

Appendix D: Consent Form

[SPANISH]

Fecha:
Nombre del participante:
Ubicación:

Este formulario de consentimiento presento yo, investigadora principal y estudiante de posgrado de la Universidad de Boston ubicada en Boston, Massachusetts, EEUU. Todas las entrevistas y observaciones dirigido por mi son para su propia investigación y están destinadas para su proyecto de tesis de posgrado, enfocado en las prácticas culinarias de los inmigrantes libaneses de primera y segunda generación en Argentina.

Su participación en este proyecto es voluntaria. Las actividades participativas del proyecto incluyen y se limitan a la práctica diaria y rutinaria de cocina en su propio hogar, en la cual el investigador principal participará junto con Usted y su familia. Yo le voy a preguntar durante el proceso de cocinar sobre sus prácticas culinarias y tradicionales en el hogar, específicamente las prácticas relacionadas con su herencia libanesa. Me gustaría pasar 3 a 4 horas con Uds. en su casa, o bastante tiempo para dedicarnos a una práctica culinaria que Uds. consideran significativa.

El único riesgo percibido en este estudio es la pérdida de confidencialidad. Los beneficios del estudio se relacionan principalmente con beneficios sociales más amplios, como un mejor entendimiento de las vías y costumbres de comida de los inmigrantes y cómo las personas y organizaciones pueden usar ese conocimiento y datos para acoger y acomodar con más éxito las populaciones inmigrantes de los países del Medio Oriente.

La información sobre usted y su familia se mantiene confidencial por mí durante mi investigación en discos protegidos con contraseña en mi posesión. Me voy a usar su nombre real en mi tesis a menos que prefiera mantener la confidencialidad de su apellido y / o identidad. Si es así, por favor selecciona la caja debajo, y con gusto le asignaré un nombre de alias a usted y / o a su familia en todos los documentos escritos para la universidad. Si su preferencia cambia, por favor me avisa, y yo puedo hacer los cambios como corresponde.

Yo estoy muy agradecida por su participación en este proyecto y espero cocinar con usted.

[ENGLISH]

This consent form is presented to you by me, Giselle Kennedy Lord, principal researcher and graduate student at Boston University located in Boston, Massachusetts, USA. All interviews and observations hereafter are for research purposes and intended for use in my graduate thesis project exploring the food practices of first and second-generation Lebanese immigrants in Argentina.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. Participatory activities of the project include and are limited to routine, daily cooking practice in your own home, which I will participate in alongside you and your family. I will ask a number of questions during the cooking process pertaining to your food practices at home, specifically any food practices connected to your Lebanese heritage. I hope to spend 3-4 hours with you in your home, or ample time to engage in a cooking practice deemed meaningful by you.

The only perceived risk of participating in this study is the loss of confidentiality and the benefits of the study pertain primarily to broader, social benefits such as a greater understanding of immigrant foodways and how people and organizations might use that knowledge and data to more successfully welcome and accommodate newcomers from Middle East countries.

Information about you and your family is kept confidential by me during my research, the principal researcher, on a password-protected hard drive in my possession. I will use your true name in the thesis paper unless you prefer to keep your family name and/or identity confidential. If so, please check the box below and I will gladly assign an alias name to you and/or your family in all papers and documents written for submission. Should your preference change at any time, simply let me know and I will act accordingly.

I am very grateful for your participation in this project and look forward to cooking with you.

Saludos,

Giselle Kennedy Lord

_____

Your signature
[by signing this document, you agree to participate in the activities as described above and state that you understand the scope of the project]:

_____

Appendix E: IRB Exempt Approval and Changes Clarification Form

Boston University Charles River Campus Institutional Review Board

25 Buick Street
Room 157
Boston, Massachusetts 02215
T 617-358-6115
www.bu.edu/irb

Notification of IRB Review: Exemption Request

February 26, 2018

Giselle Lord, B.A.
Gastonomy
Boston University Metropolitan College
755 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215

Protocol Title:	From Beirut to Patagonia: The Expression of Home and Identity in the Kitchens of Lebanese Diaspora Families in Argentina
Protocol #:	4767X
Funding Agency:	James Beard Foundation
Grant #:	2017-020889
IRB Review Type:	Exempt (2)

Dear Ms. Lord:

On February 26, 2018, the IRB determined that the above-referenced protocol meets the criteria for exemption in accordance with CFR 46.101(b)(2). Per the protocol, this study aims to gather information on the food habits of first and second-generation Lebanese individuals and families living in Argentina through interviews and observational methods. The exempt determination includes the use of:

1. The consent form in English and Spanish
2. The interview script in English and Spanish
3. The recruitment email in English and Spanish
4. The attestation form and international research form

Additional review of this study is not needed unless changes are made to the current version of the study. Any changes to the current protocol must be reported and reviewed by the IRB. If you have any changes, please submit the ***Clarification Form*** located at http://www.bu.edu/researchsupport/compliance/human-subjects/. No changes can be implemented until they have been reviewed by the IRB.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 617-358-6117.

Sincerely,

Mikaela Niemasz-Cavanagh
IRB Analyst
Charles River Campus IRB

cc: Professor Karen Metheny, PhD

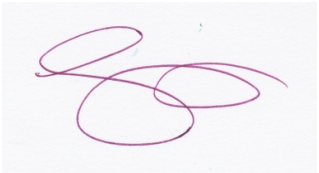
CHANGES CLARIFICATION FORM

PROTOCOL INFORMATION	
Protocol Number:	4767X
Protocol Title:	From Beirut to Patagonia: The Expression of Home and Identity in the Kitchens of Lebanese Diaspora Families in Argentina
Principal Investigator:	Giselle Kennedy Lord

Please describe any changes to this protocol. The IRB will review these changes to determine if the research activity still qualifies for exemption.

I have connected with the director of an organization called CELIBAL - which works to promote an inclusive and distinct Lebanese identity for the diaspora community in all of Latin America. He is enthusiastic about my research and has offered to support the research by sending out a survey to his many contacts throughout the continent. I met with him to look over the survey I drew up and correct language errors, and I also wrote the survey in English to send to contacts in the US. He has offered to translate it to Portuguese to send to contacts in Brazil.

I've attached Word documents of the both the English and Spanish versions of the survey. I've drawn up the survey on my personal website so a link can be sent out instead of a Word document - this way it will be accessible to anyone with an internet connection (regardless of software) and I will be collecting the data on the backend of my (secure) website. I intend to put the CELIBAL logo on that page as well as the BU gastronomy logo, so participants know which entities I am associated with. Here is the web form in Spanish and here is the English version (these pages are not public, they are only findable via the links).

Principal Investigator's Signature:__  _____ Date: March 21, 2018

Appendix F: Interview Transcripts

Aida [SPANISH]

Giselle: ¿Y los dos padres su mamá y su papá?
Aida: árabes de Yaroun, es el pueblo de mi papa, en el Líbano
Giselle: ¿Y su mama?
Aida: También de Yaroun pero, fue criada en (No se entiende). Mira (le muestra fotos) acá tengo de San Martin de Los Andes, acá lo vas a ver al padre Andrés, acá me case, estas son todas de acá hay un montón para mirar, pero mi madre fue criada en…Ves acá está el padre Andrés, esto es cuando inauguraron la iglesia ves? Estaba más gordito
Giselle: ¿Es el mismo? ¿Es el mismo hombre?
Aida: ¡Claro!
Aida: Hace 20 años cuando inauguraron la iglesia en el 98
Giselle: Pero los otros padres cambian como dos años?
Aida: si, pero lo mandaron a hacer una iglesia en Paraguay, estuvo como 5 o 6 años, yo creía que no venía más porque lo cambiaron y tiene ordenes él y allá hizo una iglesia también.
¿Se graba lo que yo digo? ¿Se escucha?
Giselle: Si, ¿está bien?
Aida: Entonces hablo mejor
Giselle: No, normal
Aida: esto fue cuando inauguraron la iglesia árabe
Giselle: ¿Acá en Argentina?
Aida: Claro, ¿Esta ves? La iglesia yo fui a la inauguración, fui con una señora amiga, una compañera. Esto fue el día de la fiesta, hicieron una gran fiesta en un salón hicieron comida argentina saque lo que pude en la inauguración. Estaban al entrar a la iglesia los granaderos, ¿sabes quiénes son los granaderos argentinos?
Giselle: ¿Entonces su familia es Maronita?
Aida: No, no se sabía Maronita, mi madre fue criada en ese pueblo ese que quiere hacerlo .. Nazaret porque mi papa falleció cuando yo era chiquita y los chicos quedaban en una iglesia, entonces el matrimonio este como no podían tener hijos iban y sacaban los chicos de ahí de los conventos. Yo no conocí abuelos ningunos ni de padre ni de madre, entonces esta señora vivía en Nazaret, que no es tan lejos de donde estábamos, yo por eso no quiero ir porque sé que mi madre estaba criada ahí, me da pena que la agarren los judíos ahora, ¿entendes? entonces tengo como una rebeldía
Giselle: ¿Entonces su madre y su padre emigraron acá desde el Líbano?
Aida: Claro
Aida: primero vino papa cuando era soltero, Joven, veinte veintiuno vino porque tenía primos acá y se quedó un tiempo pero ya conocía a mi madre, entonces estuvo un par de años, dos o tres, y luego fue y se casó allá e hizo una casa tenía un terreno, la levanto él porque era muy mañoso muy trabajador.
Fue se casó y nació una hija, mi hermana en el Líbano. Entonces fue se casó y nació una hija mi hermana, en el Líbano me llevaba 10 años, así que ahora tendría como noventa y cinco años después nació un hijo varón, entonces como era chiquito el pueblo tuvo una enfermedad no lo pudieron curar y murió. Mi papa lloro mucho porque viste que los hombres quieren varones, entonces al poco tiempo se vino de vuelta a trabajar trabajo, trabajo, junto masare es plata ¿sabías?
Giselle: Si, me dijo antes

Aida: Se subieron a un barco con mi hermana que tenía cuatro años
Giselle: ¿Por qué eligieron la Argentina?
Aida: Porque papa tenia primos acá por Palermo vinieron y estuvieron radicados acá con trabajo, estuvieron un tiempo pero bueno él quería a su familia. Vivió con los paisanos que tenía en ese entonces en esos lugares que se alquilaban piezas, ¿viste cómo se hacía antes? Que vos no habías nacido vivió así el con mama con la nena que era chiquita y después porque era muy trabajador mi papa compro este lote acá esto. Esto fue en el año… mi hermano tenía unos meses esta casa tiene como ochenta y ocho años con una habitación sola un baño una cocina como se arreglaba la gente antes. El trabajaba y trabajaba y nació un hermano mío que murió ahora
Félix mi papa tenía un hermano allá Félix estaba contento porque eran varones ¿viste? El quería varones nacieron tres varones, el mayor, este que murió ahora Alejandro y después nació mi hermano mas chico después nací yo que tengo ochenta y cinco años, cumplí ahora el 30 de Diciembre
Giselle: ¿Entonces usted es la más joven de sus hermanos?
Aida: tengo una hermana más que yo le llevo cuatro años más.
Giselle: Cocina comida Libanesa par esas fiestas? Pero des hay una foto hice una fiesta y vino el padre Andrés.
Giselle: ¿Ustedes tomaban café?
Giselle: ¿Qué es esto?
Hicimos una fiesta un día que fue el día del vecino
Mi mama siempre me dijo cuidado con los hombres árabes cuando era joven, tiene otras ideas de vos y quizás mejor un chico americano está con otra mente si podes seguir tus sueños
Aida: estaba anunciada lluvia, tormenta, suerte, suerte riega las plantas
Giselle: ¿Llega el otoño no?
Giselle: ¿Cómo es su nombre entero?
Aida: yo el primero Joseph Habih, traducido es José Ahaka
Giselle: Usted es aida Habib?
Aida: No, Aida ahaka
Giselle: Nosotros tenemos todo un nombre solo, no tenemos dos
Aida: ¿Vos tenés un solo nombre?
Giselle: Claudia Kennedy
Aida: ¿Kennedy es tu apellido? Escúchame, Tenían algo que ver con los Kennedy?
Giselle: No, solamente que éramos de Irlanda
Giselle: Las mujeres en este momento estamos haciendo lo que queremos con los nombres la verdad y para nosotros era importante tener los dos nombres, yo cambie para ser Giselle Kennedy Lord, el nombre de mi marido es Lord entonces no quería perder mi apellido es parte de mi saque la mitad del nombre la verdad es que Claudia es el nombre de mi mama. El apellido de mi papa es mi nombre segundo y el apellido de mi marido ahora es mi apellido.
Aida: Porque si heredas las cosas materiales el nombre también.
Giselle: Eso también porque mis hijos si quieren buscar nuestra historia, yo crecí con el nombre Kennedy y no quiero perderlo.
Aida: Claro es importante, nosotros llegamos acá cuando mataron a Kennedy.
Pusimos el televisor blanco y negro y yo le dije a mi marido: “enchufa la televisión” que queríamos mirar como lo mataron.
Giselle: ¿Y te mudaste?

Aida: Acá yo vivía con mis padres me case vivía con mi madre ocho años me quede a una cuadra de acá entonces mi mama vendió después la casa, mi papa se había muerto cuando yo tenía diecinueve años, Si yo lo levante, él tuvo un ataque un derrame de la mente. De repente un domingo estaba cociendo bordando para mi sobrina, estaba cociéndole bordándole el vestido de comunión, estaba yo sola con mama y creí que se golpeó porque mi mama tenía masetas grandes, con plantas, un patio grande pensé que se había golpeado en la cabeza con la maceta, un ataque cardiaco un ACV,
Giselle: Pero después du mama con seis hijos...
Aida: No, éramos cinco en ese momento, después empezamos a casarnos mi hermana se casó mientras estábamos acá en esta casa, estaba distinta porque yo la reforme porque puse un negocio.
Giselle: ¿Qué tipo de negocio?
Aida: Primero puse Un kiosco, ¿sabes lo que es?
Giselle: Si,
Aida: Después puse un almacén, yo hacía estas tortas para vender ¿viste?
Giselle: ¿En el almacén usted hizo comidas Argentinas?
Aida: Y si
Giselle: ¿Cuándo cocina la comida Libanesa, con la familia?
Aida: Hacia pero, yo no tenía tiempo de cocinar mucha comidan en ese tiempo no se usaba, la comida libanesa lleva mucho tiempo de preparación
Aida: Yo no hacia comida hacia postres.
Giselle: Ah, ok
Aida: Pero, si venían los chicos de la escuela y más los días de lluvia, me iba a adentro y me ponía a preparar algo lo vendía, después vendí mucho tiempo para afuera, también tuve gente.
Vamos a hacer una cosa: mientras tanto mojamos un poco el trigo, después miramos fotos.
Voy a mojar el trigo para que se hinche.
Giselle: ¿Dónde lo compró?
Aida: En la dietética.
Giselle: También estoy notando que tiene zatar siete especies
Aida: ¿Dónde compras vos? Hay una dietética en Palermo se llama Damasco
Giselle: Lo vi en una tienda que se llama… en Santa Fe
En la panadería Árabe en Scalabrini Ortiz, es toda la zona de árabes y armenios
Giselle: (lee) "Pimiento de Jamaica"
Aida: Porque también tiene pimiento de Jamaica este también del Líbano
Yo también tengo del Líbano, eso no se echa a perder ¡mira! Porque yo sola lo como
A ver lee lo que dice acá,
Giselle: ¡Me encanto! ¿Y eso también es en el mismo lugar?
Aida: Lo compre en el Líbano, compre un paquete de un cuarto kilo y fui usando, no conocen los sabores acá, yo le pongo poco pero en la comida ¿ves? Vamos a preparar los pancitos y arriba vos vas a ponerle esto.
Tomate el mate
Giselle: Ah, ok
Aida: ves cada vez que yo hago el Leben, laban le decimos, es lo mismo la verdad laban le decía mamá porque decía que yo no podía pronunciar, yo hago un litro de leche, en esta jarra que tiene un litro cuando hierve la leche lo dejas entibiar, le pones el dedo como si fueras a darle la leche a los niños tibiecito ahora en el verano, se hace rápido lindo, la leche entera no descremada porque yo hice descremada y no sale.

Giselle: Necesita la grasa
Aida: Esto guardo cada vez que guardo un pote de esto, para un litro de leche, ¿cómo te lo doy para llevarlo?
Giselle: ¿Pero es laban?
Aida: yo lo compre ahí en Damasco que mama también compraba ahí esa panadería tiene muchos años era del padre de el que está ahora, yo compro ahí las masas fina, compro muchas cosas compre esto mira:
Es riquísimo no me acuerdo como se llama, ¿ves? Esto lo compre en Damasco, esto podes llevarlo a tu casa para hacer arroz.
Yo cuando era chica mi mama hacía de esta manera yo te explico: agarro una ollita chiquita le pongo una taza así la mitad de arroz pero primero en la olla le pones un trocito de manteca, un diente de ajo cortadito chiquito que se dore y le pones un puñado de esto una o dos cucharaditas para mí, y lo dejas dorar también.
Giselle: ¿Pero es arroz, no es un grano?
Aida: Es un grano. Un día fui y vi que una señora pidió esto para hacer el arroz, mi mama como no conseguía por acá cuando éramos chicos, ella le ponía de esto.
Giselle: Ah sí, Vermicelli
Aida: No, cabello de ángel le dicen ¿ves?
Giselle: Una pasta
Aida: Los rompía con la mano los doras yo creía que con esto, pero el verdadero arroz se hace con esto pero esto lo tienen allá en las panaderías árabes, no sé cómo se llama en árabe
Giselle: Voy a sacar una foto
Aida: ¿querés llevarte un poquito?
Giselle: Si, para buscarlo estoy curiosa
Aida: Ahora te envuelvo unos granos
Giselle: ¿Entonces se usa para empezar?
Aida: Yo compre de esto en la panadería venden un coso de plástico como una tacita de plástico con esto preparo para la gente que no tiene yo lo compre hace mucho, en el invierno pero esto tenés que guardarlo como una reliquia como si fuera oro. Cada vez que haces guardas como si fuera una tacita, yo le pongo más o menos así, con esto volvés a hacer otra vez o sea que yo ahora compro otro de leche le pongo la azúcar y me sale y lo pongo acá, hago esta bolsita pero no se lava con jabón o detergente con nada se lava, con agua se enjuaga mucho porque queda el olor al acido
Aida: Tengo que conseguir una tela nueva para hacer otra
Entonces después que esta el laban que no esté cuajado, guardo un poquito para la próxima vez y con lo demás lo pongo acá líquido, lo colgas acá porque va cayendo en la pileta el suero, guardas un poquito como una taza de café para un litro de leche, sino te sale muy pesado, y lo dejas toda la noche. Yo hago así dentro del horno, apagado eh!, en el invierno tarda más, mas calentita la leche, pero ahora en el verano enseguida se hace. Un día lo hice en el día lo deje a la noche y a la mañana ya estaba hecho.
Giselle: ¿Pero es importante tener un poquito de calor para fermentarlo?
Aida: No Fermentarlo, se va solo se cae en la pileta al suelo te queda la cuajada que le dicen, quiere decir que está cortado como un queso liviano pero este quedo hermoso mira, ni lo probé yo, no tiene sal no tiene nada con una cucharadita, vas a tener lindo trabajo ahora, así vas a aprender, yo porque hice los pancitos para el cumpleaños de Paula pero lo rellene con cosas de acá fiambre, palta
Esto ya está para guarda.

¿Entendiste cómo se hace?
Giselle: ¿Hay otras maneras?
Aida: Esta es la manera de mi madre, pero siempre salía bien porque ella hacia así casi todos los días, éramos tantos hermanos.
Giselle: ¿El laban?
Aida: hacia comidas con laban, el Kebbe hacia como huevitos rellenos con carne picada lo hervía en esa cuajada y después lo ponía en aceite en un frasco así comíamos cuando queríamos agarrabas uno de esos, ¿sabes lo que era? ¡Un manjar!
Giselle: El Kebbe es como una albóndiga, es como si fuera un huevo lo amasas con la mano le ponía carne picada y lo rellenaba, entonces eso lo hervía primero con el laban hecho no este, la cuajada digamos en una olla grande hacia litros y litros y hacia cantidad después tenía un frasco grande de vidrio, para que se mantenga bien, ponía aceite y eso se mantenía ahí adentro haces algo como una berenjena que lo haces en escabeche una cosa así para guardar y cuando tenés hambre comes eso o servís lo tenés en la heladera sacas y servís no tenés que hacerlo en el momento .
Giselle: ¿ah, Lo comes frio?
Aida: Claro, muy rico quedaba nos peleábamos por comer mi mama lo hacía de vez en cuando mucho trabajo y todos eran de comer mucho los varones ¿viste?
Giselle: ¿Usaban el laban para comer otra cosa también?
Aida: No, lo tomábamos así como yogurt
Giselle: ¿En qué parte del día, La mañana, la tarde?
Aida: Claro, los que querían tomarlo cuando había heladera, cuando no pobrecita con hielo acá venían las barras de hielo porque antes no había esto la heladera grande para mi sola. Pero estoy acostumbrada gracias a Dios a tener de todo para cocinar no quiero que me falte nunca para cocinar ¿ves Como tengo acá arriba? Milanesas cuando vienen los chicos, están preparadas de carne de cerdo de pollo pero Son de comer mucho no me da el tiempo. Esto lo vamos a dejar porque lo vamos a necesitar ahora voy a mojar el trigo
Giselle: ¿A los chicos les gusta la comida Libanesa y Argentina igual?
Aida: Si, el más chico el de Paula tiene la mama profesora de la iglesia Maronita
Cuando cumplió los cien años a mí me invitaron para ir después que fui al Líbano vinieron todos los maronitas de allá con esas túnicas que se ponen, esos sombreros a festejar.
Acá hay medio kilo pero, yo no lo voy a hacer relleno lo voy a hacer liso como lo sirvieron el otro día si no con el relleno sale muy pesado. Entonces lo voy a hacer cuadradito como lo hicieron allá, entonces pongo la mitad, no tengo balanza, esto se hincha mucho después yo tengo Bulgur del más grueso que a veces hago una comida con carne con cebollita queda muy rico, acá dice fino o grueso tengo acá todo suelto porque me van quedando lo uso cuando hago ensalada.
Giselle: ¿Siempre tiene Bulgur?
Aida: Este es el grueso ¿ves?
Giselle: ¿No es arroz no? ¿Con que lo usa?
Aida: No, Con una comida que yo hago a mi marido le gustaba mucho, con cebolla, ají, pedacitos de carne como si fuera un guiso, todo se cocina, le agregas el tomate como una salcita cuando está bien dorado le agregas agua lo dejas hervir y cocinas, cocinas, a mi marido le encantaba.
Giselle: ¿Es un plato de usted?
Aida: No de mi mama los días de frio, un plato frio es más fácil, no es caro, tiene mucha sustancia el trigo
¿Tomaste mate?
Giselle: Si

Aida: Nosotros teníamos una fábrica acá abajo cuando éramos jóvenes íbamos a comprar ahí el trigo lo tostaban en el suelo sobre el piso la fábrica se llamaba Tarbush.
Giselle: ¿los dueños eran libaneses?
Aida: Si, Árabes, pero me parece que eran musulmanes
Giselle: ¿Todavía está?
Aida: No sé si esta no voy mucho ahí, conozco uno que está casado con una señora Argentina uno de los más chicos, muchos varones tuvo ese hombre y siempre íbamos cuando nosotros éramos jóvenes cuando yo vivía acá a seis cuadras mi mama nos mandaba a comprar y yo la mandaba a Mirta la mamá de las nenas, cuando ella iba a un colegio que era una iglesia la mandaba a comprar, los dejaban secar al sol después lo pasan por una maquina no me acuerdo bien, de chica lo vi era todo fresco no había otras cosas como se compran ahora se venden que hay en todos los lugares. ¿Ves? Lo enjuago así.
Giselle: Si siempre con las manos,
Aida: mucho con las manos
Giselle: la gente Árabe Cocinamos con las manos
Aida: Es que las manos dicen muchas cosas
Giselle: Es mejor para sentirlo ¿No?
Aida: Si, pero hay que lavarse las manos
Giselle: Mi mama es lo mismo especialmente con el Bulgur, todo con el kibey...
Aida ¿Qué hora es? Siete y cuarto, dentro de un rato empezamos a poner la carne a sazonarla, mama cuando lo hacía, a veces lo hacía de un día para otro, lo cocinaba y lo dejaba en la heladera cuando ya había heladera. ¿Tomaste vos? ¿O yo?
Giselle: Es su turno
Aida: ¿Lo llenaste vos al mate?
Giselle: Si
Aida: ¿Ves? tengo todos los frasquitos me sirven tengo canela en polvo ¿viste? Tengo así separado a mi manera ni frascos caros ni nada le pongo la etiquetita ¿ves?
Giselle: ¿Qué es esto? Ah es para escribirlo, perfecto, también tengo un sistema así.
Aida: Me gusta así
Giselle: Es muy organizado
Aida: tengo de todas las especies
Giselle: ¿Que es este mix de semillas?
Aida: Este lo hice yo y me olvide que estaba el otro día limpiando lo encontré tiene
Cascara de huevo, chía
Giselle: ¡Cool!
Chía mira qué lindo aroma tiene yo le pongo a las ensaladas
Giselle: Si tiene, en español no sé cómo se dice “savory seeds”
Aida: yo tengo muchas semillas siempre
Giselle: ¿Es siempre lo mismo?
Aida: Lo dijeron por televisión lo anote y lo hice, yo como sin sal le pongo por encima de las verduras para que tenga gusto a algo. Ahora empecé a usar mucho la pimienta negra
A mí me gusta el mate con azúcar porque ellos lo toman amargo no me gusta, ya para amarga esta la vida. Ahora vamos a hacer una cosa Giselle, mientras tomamos mate, ¿querés comer torta?
Giselle: No ya no, quizás después de la cena
Aida: No en la cena no vas a comer eso, vamos a comer otras cosas ricas con el mate para eso lo hice, ¡Cómo tomas mate loca! Qué lindo que tome mate

Giselle: (risas) me gusta mucho
Aida: Me encanta, ¿vos haces cosas dulces en tu casa?
Giselle: Si me gusta hacer
Aida: Esto lo vas a hacer
Es una buena idea es sencillo, con cualquier fruta
Aida: Si, es sencillo
Prendí el horno lo apague y te fui a buscar yo soy rápida para cocinar ¿no? Muchos años de mi trabajo en la cocina
Giselle: Es como, el cuerpo lo sabe cómo hacer.
Aida: Tengo mucha vitalidad, mucha fuerza, siempre mi hija me dice: "yo no soy como vos mama", y bueno pero sabes que pasa, yo tire del carro sola me ¿entendés? cuando me case tenía un marido tranquilo, todo le venía bien yo miraba para adelante para el horizonte, yo soy de Capricornio del treinta de Diciembre, después lee lo que dice ahí de Capricornio.
Este es mi hermano el que falleció cuando cumplió noventa años me mandaron a llamar y fuimos a la fiesta en Mar Del Plata
No quiero que se haga tarde voy a buscar una bolsita, ¿Esta frio el mate?
Giselle: No, lo tome todo
Aida: Una bolsita chica quiero. Esto guardo de las empanadas cuando hago la milanesa
Giselle: ¿Y usa la misma masa para el Fatay?
Aida: No, yo no hago las empanadas caseras no, es otra masa,
Giselle: ¿Ahora o siempre?
Aida: Yo hice cursos de cocina pero, ya hace muchos años, estos son semillas a mi hija le gustaban las semillas, yo las compro y las tuesto
Giselle: Algo interesante cuando estaba cocinando con las mujeres de la iglesia estaban mezclando el aceite de girasol con el aceite de olivo
Aida: ¿Quién, vos fuiste a ver?
Giselle antes del evento ayude
Aida: ¿Hoy fuiste vos?
Giselle Si, pero son argentinos. ¿Usted hace eso, mezcla los aceites?
Aida: Si
¿Usted hace eso mezcla los aceites?
Aida: Si
Giselle: Me estaban diciendo que los mezclan para que no tenga un sabor tan fuerte a olivo
Aida: Llena el matecito, pone le agua al mate. Ves esta pimienta para moler, esto es zatar
Giselle: Ah, ¿sí?, pero es diferente no hay sésamo
Aida: Así se compra, se compra suelto todo molido
Giselle ¿Y se llama zatar?
Aida: Ah, no siete especias me equivoque
Giselle: Y es popular las siete especias para los Argentinos,
Aida: Es muy rica, es linda hacerla casera también, yo le compre un libro a mi hija explica las especias que hay que ponerle las cantidades. Te podes llevar de acá de bs as o tenés allá
Giselle: La verdad es que tenemos buenas especias por suerte y en este momento en mi pueblito tenemos es que ella está comprando un zatar muy rico y es divino y lo compra de una pareja de California y la pareja lo compra la hierba del Líbano.
Aida: ¿Vos tenés para cocinarte acá dónde vas?
Giselle: Si, tengo una cocinita y todo

Aida: ¿tenés ollita y todo?, proba si querés hacerlo a esto es fácil pero no tenés todos los ingredientes ¿no?
Si esa es la cosa, pero es fácil llevarlo conmigo
Aida: Probálo si no te gusta
Giselle: Voy a sacar otra foto. Antes de empezar mis estudios trabaje como fotógrafa, bueno me has visto en la iglesia con mi cámara.
Aida: Si, ah claro
Aida: Te explico en vivo y en directo:
Giselle: Bueno, perfecto
Aida: No se cómo se llama en árabe
Aida: Mira Giselle vení así me pongo a cocinar que se me hace tarde
Prender el fuego, manteca no aceite, un trozo así según el arroz, yo uso mucho la taza de medida si haces una taza entera pones cincuenta gramos de manteca taza de café con leche pones la manteca, doras un diente de ajo, picado con cuchara de madera, lo haces dorar bien, le agregas eso que te di, agua, sal y calcúlale media taza de arroz 3 veces la taza ósea medio de agua, yo hago así me queda bárbaro, lo cocinas de vuelta cuando hierve el agua le pones el arroz lavándole pones despacito q se cocine cuando ya está seco, se está cocinando quince de arroz lo apagas lo tapas y dejas q se hinche el arroz. Después cómelo como quieras, con lavan con lo que quieras.
Giselle: ¡Perfecto!
Aida: Vamos a guardar todo esto que me molesta. Te lo explique así para que me entiendas corazón, me parece que me voy a poner a enseñar comida árabe yo
(Ruido de platos)
Giselle: Estoy muy alerta ahora con el mate
Aida: eso quiere decir que tomaste bien mate
Giselle: ¿Te gusta más cocinar los dulces?
Aida: Dulces más o menos si puedo aprender aprendo, ahora no cocino mucho, estoy haciendo un acto de amor hoy porque, me duele mucho la espalda no puedo… por eso me fui a acostar un rato porque si no aguanto mi cuerpo te das cuenta, no es por mala voluntad porque voluntad no me falta son muchos años que trabaje mucho no sé cómo voy a terminar.
Giselle: Estoy llorando por la cebolla
Aida: Extrañas a tu marido
Giselle: No, por la cebolla
Aida: Ah por la cebolla ya sé, yo ya estoy más acostumbrada
Giselle: Siempre estoy más sensitiva a la cebolla siempre en mi casa mi marido las cortas para mí.
Aida: Ah, ¿sí? Tenes un buen marido
Giselle: Si
Aida: ¿Es americano?
Giselle: Si le gusta cocinar
Aida: Ah, a todos los hombres
Giselle: Entonces cocinamos juntos
Aida: mi yerno también cocina mucho
Giselle: ¿sí? ¿Sus hijas cocinan también? ¿Cocinan comida Libanesa?
Aida: si, mi hija está de acá la hace
Aida: Con este aparatito que me lo dio mi madre vacío las berenjenas
Giselle Es muy útil
Aida: Le sacas a la berenjena un trocito de arriba

Giselle: Lo agregas a la mezcla
Aida: Eso es lo que comiste primero
Giselle: Ah, ok
Aida Juntas todo eso, el zapallito, la semilla todo, lo cocinas despacito y se tritura todo, la cebolla me hace llorar. Córtala en cuatro ¿viste como lo corte yo Giselle? Hace así la mitad ves así
Giselle: ¿No usa la planchita?
Aida: No hace falta
Giselle Ah, ok
Aida: Antes hacía todo a mano, esta es antigua pero funciona
Giselle: si, funciona
Aida: Si funciona la mande a arreglar, ¿ves? así como hago yo le saco todo esto duro, lo cortas por la mitad
Giselle: Son como ocho pedazos
Aida: Voy a tomar uno sin azúcar y nada mas y basta de mate.
(Ruido de fotos)
¿Me estas sacando una foto?
Aida: ¿Yo también salgo?
Giselle: Si, te voy a enviar todas las fotos
Aida: ¿En la computadora me vas a enviar?
Giselle: Si
Aida: Le pongo un poquito de ají ¿ves el ají como lo limpio? Le saco todo lo feo, la mitad vamos a poner, ponele así corazón
Giselle: ¿Su mama también usaba los morrones en el kibbe?
Aida: Si creo que le ponía yo no me acuerdo mucho de eso pero yo le hago para darle gusto a la comida
Giselle: Cambia la recetas como le gustan
Aida: claro, el sabor de cada uno para que tenga sabor la comida
Giselle: Si
Aida: ¿Cómo te dice tu mama en árabe? (habla en árabe) quiere decir ¿cómo estás?
Giselle: ¿Y cómo respondes?
Aida: Bien, Gracias (risas) shukraan Como dijiste vos. ¿Vas a sacar la foto? no sé porque eso tiene más años que la escarapela una gubia le mostrás a tu marido por ahí tiene alguna cosa así si tiene herramientas
¿Tiene alguna cosa así?, Yo no sé cómo me vino a aparecer, Se vende en las casas árabes para hacer eso, pero yo tengo eso que me dejo mamá yo no compre esas cosas es una gubia le dicen, le pusimos esto porque me lastimaba la mano.
Giselle: Esto es como una, no sé cómo se dice la palabra heirloom una cosa que se pasa por generaciones ¿no?,
Aida: Que se yo, para la madera, para hacer agujeros una gubia.
Giselle: ¿entonces nunca usa las recetas?
Aida: No, y ya están de memoria y bueno porque son años
Giselle: Pero tiene amigos que le piden las recetas
Aida: No, recetas como estas están en los libros árabes, de este hombre, no me gustan, para mi tienen poco sabor. Según cada lugar, cada país, ejemplo acá las empanadas comunes se comen de una manera en Córdoba, en Salta de otra, en Bariloche de otra entonces según el lugar, los pueblos lo integran en sus costumbres por lo menos lo que yo sé en el Líbano debe pasar lo mismo.

Giselle: Depende de la cocinera
Aida: No, depende de la región donde vivís, los ingredientes que tenes, porque si a veces estas lejos de una ciudad y no tenés, te arreglas con lo que tenés.
Giselle: ¿cree usted que han mezclado los sabores de Argentina y el Líbano?
Aida: no, ella ponía lo que se usa allá pero con el tiempo venían muchas cosas de allá porque la gente empezaba a pedir por la comunidad Libanesa fue grande hay por todas partes de la república en los pueblo, Perdón, con esta cebolla lloro
Giselle: pero mezclándo las tradiciones, los sabores argentinos
Aida: Hay similares en todos lados. Sabes lo que vamos a hacer Giselle? Ahora lo amaso y vamos a ver los pancitos y vamos haciendo eso y las ensaladas voy a hacer, ¿No queres mate?
Giselle: Esta bien, gracias.
Aida: Ahora saco yo, Tengo sed. Esto lo compre acá lo saque porque no tenía lugar en la heladera
Giselle: ¿cómo se llaman en español?
Aida: Rabanito, entonces ahora para para lavarlos voy a usar la tabla y cortarlos todos finitos, córtalos así, y esto si va a la basura. ¿Ves cómo se puso? Estaba verde, ahí tenés trabajo, sos mi colaboradora hoy mi ayudante de cocina
Giselle: el sous chef decimos cuando está en un restaurant hay un chef y el hombre o la mujer al lado es el sous chef, el segundo pues.
Aida: Ahora vamos a poner la especia me voy a lavar las manos vamos a sacar esto, ahora vamos a hacer así mira: Primero vamos a ponerle un poco de sal, mucho no le voy a poner mejor que falte y no que sobre, después vamos a ponerle este, las siete especies,
Giselle: ¿Poquito?
Aida: no, es rico que le de sabor porque el trigo lo absorbe ¿viste?
Giselle: Ah, ok
Aida: Después vamos a poner el zatar es para otra cosa. Ahora vamos a poner un poco de esta pimienta negra la compro molida. Yo tengo el aparatito, pero a veces no anda, es más fácil así no tengo paciencia yo para es, ahora lo vamos a probar así crudo para ver como esta de sabor cuándo lo amaso
Giselle: ¿A veces hacen el kibbe nayeh?
Aida: Si, se come pero ya no lo como más mi mama la hacia la carne cortada en el momento y tenía otro sabor, en cambio ahora lo pasan por la máquina y ya no me dan ganas de comerlo, comíamos mucho con cebollita cruda arriba.
Giselle: ¿Y dónde puedo encontrar el kimeney?
Aida: No lo venden
Giselle: En los restaurantes ¿no?
Aida: ¡Ah! sí, en los restaurantes puede ser. La mejor medida que esta imposible
Giselle: La tapa. ¿El comino poquito?
Aida: le puse poquito si, una tapita, no muy llena, un poco de orégano le vamos a poner un poquito de ají molido
Giselle: ¿Qué es esto?
Aida: Ají molido
Giselle: ¿Es picante?
Aida: No, es picantito para darle un poco de sabor más cosas le pones más rico queda. ¿Estas filmando esto también?
Giselle: Si

Aida: Ahora voy a poner las manos en marcha un poquito de agüita. Me falta la carne, lo más importante
Giselle: ¿Cómo es? ¿Cómo media carne?
Aida: La Carne yo ya compre, trecientos gramos de este trigo casi le tenés que poner un kilo de carne picada, 3 veces la cantidad. Pero no lo hago relleno hoy porque yo lo hago relleno con nueces adentro.
Giselle: ¿Con las nueces adentro?
Aida: Si, le pongo nueces pero hago un relleno como si fuera para las empanadas ¿viste? con carne picada.
Giselle: Y esto es carne de vaca?
Aida: Si, bola de lomo, anótatelo si querés después porque es una carne tierna y no tiene tanta grasa yo le hice sacar e igual tiene.
Giselle: Es mejor. ¿A veces usan el cordero o nunca?
Aida: No, el cordero lo hacía mama pero yo no lo uso porque no les gusta el cordero aparte para picar el cordero, no se consigue por acá
Giselle ¿Es más caro el cordero?
Aida: No, no sé, comíamos cordero pero a la parrilla mucho con papa que compraba, se usaba mucho cuando éramos chicos pero después mi papá hacia esas comidas o al horno, las chicas no lo quieren ni probar
¿Nunca cordero picado?
Aida: No, no sé si mama lo usaba no me acuerdo porque yo era chica, ella lo hacía con esta carne común pero cuando éramos chicos estaba mi papa y ella lo hacía al gusto de él también
Giselle: La verdad es que me gusta el olor
Aida: Las aromas, las especies
Giselle: Mezclado con la carne
Aida: Antes lo comíamos crudo con aceite de oliva y cebollita cruda arriba y con el relleno cuando lo hacía salteado acompañando como si fuera el relleno de las empanadas. Tenía un hermano mi mama, el único hermano que tenía, fue una historia triste y linda a la vez, resulta ella tenía un hermano varón nada más entonces como a ella la fueron a sacar de ahí del pueblo de un lugar una iglesia donde estaba puesto un convento, el hermano también estaban los dos juntos pero cuando la señora la fue a buscar a ella para adoptarla, el hermano se fue a vivir con otra familia lo llevaron. Entonces paso mucho tiempo no se vieron pasaron los años, mama se vino acá, cuando ella se casó con papá tenia quince años entonces mi papa la conocía desde chiquita fue al otro pueblo ahí, Nazaret, ya sabía quién era, y la ficho. Entonces pasaron los años, mi mama vino acá en Argentina sabia que el hermano estaba con otra familia pero el para venir acá a argentina quiso hacer su vida y se puso de polisón, quiere decir que se colgó de un barco, tenía dieciséis años, vino acá pregunto no encontró a nadie y estuvo viviendo en Brasil también, que tenían otro hermanastro de papa, el padre, mi abuelo, uno de ellos era cura y se murió por una peste, hermanastro de mamá. Mi mamá cuando estaba embarazada empezó a buscarla a ver si lo podía ver, estaba embarazada de mi hermana más chica fue al consulado Libanes y le dijeron que estaba en Argentina, y vivía en Buenos Aires, entonces ella agarro un día le faltaban pocos días para que nazca mi hermana se fue a la calle Billinghurst, donde estaba él viviendo, que se había casado con esa señora que tenía noventa años, una gallega porque el después siguió Trabajando en el barco Utepia se llamaba. Empezó a trabajar de mozo ¿sabes lo que es mozo? El que lleva las copas y atiende a la gente, mozo de barco.
Giselle: ¿Y qué estás buscando en este momento? Solo el sabor

Aida: Estoy buscando para probarlo
Giselle: Creo que no puedo tengo un estómago delicado
Aida: Si no estás acostumbrada.
Giselle: Cuando esta la bola esta buscarle un sentido
Aida: No, para unirla para amasarla como cuando unís y amasas la harina.
Ella busco la dirección y como tenía que viajar y se fue un día estando embarazada, salió mi tía, la vio embarazada a mi mama y pensó algo malo porque ella fue a buscar a su hermano, ¿entendes o no?
Giselle: creo que si
Aida: Cuando le vio le cerraba la puerta, no quería que entrara, hacía mucho calor, mi hermana nació el treinta de noviembre y ella fue los primeros días de noviembre estando embarazada, fue al consulado averiguo y le dieron la dirección. Siempre quería ir se animó un día y fue, cuando la vio pensó que el marido tenía otra mujer y que venía embarazada y no la quería recibir
Giselle: ¿Porque ella le dijo estoy buscando a mi hermano?
Aida: Si, pero no le entendía porque mi mama hablaba checurriado, entonces ella, la señora de mi tío la miro bien y eran dos gotas de agua se parecían mucho los dos hermanos. Entonces el vino de trabajar se abrazarón, lloraron después de tantos años que no se veían. Esta señora gallega fue con gente de mucho dinero a Francia, porque necesitaban una chica joven, ella hacia trabajo de lavado cuando fue la guerra española, la madre vino con dos hijas, entonces necesitaba una chica que los cuidara, entonces para eso la acepto, la escucho.
¿Sacaste la foto?
(Risas)
Aida: ¿una Canon tenés? Buenísima, ¿Salí linda yo?
Giselle: Si, muy linda
Aida: Voy a pasar a la posteridad. ¿La primera vez que haces esto?
Giselle: ¿El kimey? No, mi Mama lo hace mucho, la verdad es que es mi plato favorito
Aida: ¿Pero es distinto el que hace tu mama o parecido?
Giselle: Es menos especias, no usa los morrones, lo hace todo con cordero.
Aida: Antes se usaba acá pero se ve poco el cordero, se ve mucho más el cerdo y es más barato para la gente el cordero es más caro que la carne, pero no es malo es malo esto le da sabor el morrón, hay gente que le hace mal yo le pongo porque mama le ponía si en definitiva es carne y trigo a veces no le pongo pero le pongo al relleno pero como hoy no le hago con relleno, tiene poca sal pero esta rico. Ahora voy a hacer lo siguiente: termino con esto y hacemos las ensaladas, ¡ya son las ocho! Mucha charla no se puede tenes que venir otro día, sino que le damos de comer a esta gente. Terminamos estoy empezamos con los pancitos Giselle
Giselle: ¿Quiere que los abra?
Aida: No, quería que veas esto, le voy a poner bastante manteca para que no se pegue
Giselle: Hay mucha manteca acá me encanta la manteca
Aida: Aprovecha que sos flaquita porque cuando sos gorda no queres comer más.
Giselle: ¿Siempre es así? ¿Pedazo por pedazo?
Aida: Y si para unirlo ¿Tu mama también lo hace así? No hay otra,
Giselle: Esta es la manera más común ¿no? Porque hay muchas maneras de hacer el Kibbe.
Aida: La primera vez que le voy a hacer sin relleno pero ahora le marco se le pone aceite y manteca por arriba se levanta y no se rompe. Se une rápido porque no la hice dura esta chirlita, también la hago albóndigas y al horno pero vamos a darle la forma árabe
Giselle: ¿Y por qué el agua?

Aida: Para que se una, como lavarse las manos, gracias a Dios que tenemos las manos.
Giselle: Las herramientas más útiles
Aida: Sirven para acariciar, pegar también para cocinar y todo, yo cuando vienen los chicos les hago albóndigas de carne a mis hijos, a las chicas también les hacía mucho, trato de tener milanesas preparadas están ricas también las milanesas preparadas hago de pollo, de carne de cerdo
Giselle ¿Y por qué no hace la cebolla con un poco más de agüita y cebolla?
Aida: Pero ya está molido mejor porque si no es dura, antes lo hacía todo picado a mano pero no me da el cuerpo querida. Ahora las chicas tienen todas herramientas eléctricas para cocinar, no hacen todo a mano.
Giselle: Usamos la tecnología mucho. ¿Siempre lo corta de la misma manera?
Aida: Si
Giselle: ¿todo lo corta así No?
Aida: Y si por eso todo lo hice así para que sea el verdadero Kepi. Si eran todas señoras argentinas las que hicieron la comida, muy buena, muy rica bien libanesa. ¿A qué hora estuviste con ellas?
Giselle: Estuve un día antes
Aida: y tenían cocina ellos
Giselle: si; hay una cocina que se usa para los chicos del colegio y las cocineras normalmente cocinan para los estudiantes, me dijeron que para todas las ocasiones especiales están cocinando la comida Libanesa.
Aida: Porque ellos quieren introducir la costumbre, aún más el padre que está ahora. ¿Ves cómo se une? No ves que hay que mojar el cuchillo porque se pega
Giselle: Quiere que se quede la forma de diamante
Aida: Si, triangulo
Aida: Quedo bien
Giselle: (Saca fotos)
Aida: Ahora vamos a ponerle pedacitos de manteca con el calor mira cómo se derrite en segundos, después le pongo aceite.
Giselle: ¿De olivo?
Aida: Si
Giselle (Saca fotos)
Aida: ¡*C´est Fini* Giselle! Vamos a hacer la ensalada Giselle después los pancitos los hacemos en el momento
Giselle: Entonces siempre que cocina la comida Libanesa es para días normales
Aida: A veces también hago, no tanto, yo hice hoy en honor tuyo que querías aprender, cómo me caíste simpática ¿entendes? De buena familia se nota que sos ¿entendes?, eso vale mucho también las raíces de los seres humanos. Le sacas esto que tiene feo lo cortas finito en juliana abrilo y lo pones acá yo sin anteojos veo.
Giselle: ¿Eso es para el fatush?
Aida: Si, Es una buena libanesa tu mama y eso que cuantos años tenía cuando fue a vivir a Estados Unidos
Giselle: Si, tenía once años
Aida: Aprendió de la mamá
Giselle: Si, todo. Yo cuando era niña cuando mi abuela nos cuidó a mí y a mi hermano estábamos comiendo comida árabe, tengo recuerdos de mi abuela cerca de los olores
Aida: Aprendiste, Ya lo sabes hacer.
Giselle Quiero ser una buena ayudante

Aida ¿Quién sabe cuánto me va a salir? ¿Cuantos masares?
Giselle: ¿Cuantos qué?
Aida: Es plata en Árabe
(Risas)
Giselle: Solamente el amor.
Aida: Yo tengo acá el libro que le compre a mi hija hice fotocopias, hay shawarma, humus, arroz a la persa esto es riquísimo con pollo, creo que tengo te puedo dar tengo más fotocopias, lo haces después en tu casa
Giselle: ¡Qué bueno! que suerte, perfecto.
Aida: Hice porque todos me piden. Vos vas haciendo una parte y yo otra
Giselle: ¿El fatush su mama lo hizo?
Aida: Me lo hacía cuando éramos chicos, después me olvide no me acordaba como era como yo le regale a mi hija ese libro para un cumpleaños es lindo.
Sino cuando vengas en otro momento si venís un día a Buenos aires te compro uno y te lo regalo
Giselle: Si me dice el nombre
Aida: Lo podes sacar por internet del chef Abdala
Giselle: Es de el Líbano él
Aida: Si, vino desde chico
(Suena el teléfono)
Aida: Te voy a poner un disco de una libanesa Árabe que mi padre escuchaba, cuando éramos chicos
(Pone música Árabe)
Giselle: Mis tías y mi mamá siempre con esta música a mi tía le encanta bailar y siempre cuando estamos juntos bailan.
Giselle: ¿Quién es?
Aida: Se llama Fairuz, mi papa lloraba de emoción. ¡Qué hermosa que sos, te quiero! me haces acordar a mi cuando era chica, yo también fui chica alguna vez.
Esta la compre un día que fui con paula a una institución Siria y grababan esos discos y se lo compre, en el dos mil siete, lo escuche y dije: ¡Ay la Failuz! La llame a una prima hermana, que vive en Córdoba, la única que me queda y me dijo: ¿" Estas escuchando a la Failuz"? Tiene ochenta y pico de años.

Aida [ENGLISH]

Giselle: Both your parents? Your mom and dad?
Aida: Arabs from Yaroun, that's the hometown of my father, in Lebanon
Giselle: And your mother?
Aida: Also from Yaroun but she grew up in Nazaret.
Aida: Look, (shows photos) right here I have San Martin de Los Andes, right here you'll see Father Andrés, here I got married, these are all right here [at home]. There's a ton to look at! But my mother grew up in... You see right here, it's Father Andrés, this is when they inaugurated the church, you see? He was more chubby.
Giselle: It's the same, the same guy?
Aida: For sure!! Since 20 years ago [when] they inaugurated the church, in 1998.
Giselle: But the other priests change every couple of years? Aida: Yes, but they sent him to make

a church in Paraguay, he was [there] 5 or 6 years, I thought he wouldn't come here anymore because they [moved] him, and he hes orders and there he made a church as well. Are you recording what I say? Can you hear me?
Giselle: Yes, is that ok?
Aida: Yes! Then I'll speak better!
Giselle: No, normal
Aida: This was when they inaugurated the Arab church.
Giselle: Here in Argentina?
Aida: Yes. See this? I went to the inauguration of the Church, I went with an older friend of mine, a girlfriend. This was the day of the party, they did a big party in the hall, they made Argentina, I took [the photos} I could during the inauguration. Grenadiers were entering the church. Do you know what Argentina grenadiers are?
Giselle: So your family is Maronite?
Aida: No, Maronita was not known, my mother was raised in that town that wants to do it... Nazaret. Because [her?] father passed away when [she] was very small and the kids stayed in a church, so in a marriage where they could not have children, they went and took the kids from the convents there. I did not know any of my grandparents, not of my father or my mother, but this woman lived in Nazaret, which isn't very far from where we were. That's why I do not want to go - because I know my mother was raised there and it's a shame that the Jews have it now. Do you understand? So then I have [this] rebellion.
Giselle: So your mother and father immigrated here from Lebanon?
Aida: Precisely. First my father came when he was single and young - twenty or twenty-one. He came because he had cousins here and he stayed a while but he already knew me mother, so he was a couple of years, two or three, and then he went [back] and got married there and he built a house [because] he had a plot of land, he built it himself because he was very capable and a good worker. He went and got married and they had a daughter, my sister, in Lebanon. (She was 10 years old [when they immigrated?] so now she would be about 95 years old. Then a son was born, and when he was little the town had a sickness and he could not be cured and he died. My father cried a lot because, you see, men want boys. So in a short time he went back to work. He worked and worked to earn *masare. Masare* is money, did you know that?
Giselle: Yes, you mentioned that.
Aida: They got on a boat with my sister who was four years old.
Giselle: Why did they choose Argentina?
Aida: Because my father had cousins here. They came to Palermo and were set up with work there. They were there for a while but, well, he wanted his family. He lived with the countrymen that [were there] at the time in those places where they rent [>ats]. You see how it was done before? It's that you hadn't been born, he lived like, he lived like with my mom and the baby, who was very small, and because he was hard-working, my father bought this lot here, this one. This was in the year... my brother had this house for a few months (they had my brother in this house a few months later?). He's about 88 years old... with a single room and only one bathroom, a kitchen arranged in the way people did it before.He worked and worked and my brother was born, he just died (not long before this interview). Félix my father has a brother there. Félix was content because they were boys. You see? He wanted boys, [they had] three boys. The oldest, the one that just died, Alejandro, and later the younger brother was born, and then I was born, so that I am 85 years old, my birthday just passed on the 30th of December.
Giselle: So you are the youngest of the siblings?

Aida: I have one sister who is smaller than me, I am four years older than her.
Giselle: Did you cook Lebanese food for these parties?
Aida: But there is a picture, I threw a party and Father Andres came.
Giselle: You all drank coffee? ...what is this?
Aida: We did a party one day, the Day of Neighbors... My mother always told me to be careful with Arab men when I was young, that they have other ideas of you and perhaps an American boy would be better, with a different way of thinking, so you can follow your dreams. The thunder was announcing the rain. Good luck! Lucky that it will water the plants.
Giselle: Autum is coming, no? What's your full name?
Aida: Yo el primero Joseph Habih, traducido es José Ahaka
Giselle: You are Aida Habib?
Aida: No, Aida Ahaka
Giselle: We only have one [surname], we don't have two.
Aida: You have only one name?
Giselle: Giselle Claudia Kennedy
Aida: Kennedy is your last name? Listen, do you have some sort of relation to the Kennedy family?
Giselle: No, just that they were from Ireland. In this moment, women are doing what they want with names. The truth is that for us it was important to have the two names. I changed my name to be Giselle Kennedy Lord, my husband's surname is Lord but I didn't want to lose my own last name. It's part of my [identity]. So I got rid of my middle name - the truth is that it's Claudia, my mother's name. My father's name is now my middle name and my husband's surname is my last name.
Aida: Because if you inherit material things, the name too.
Giselle: Also because if my children want to look into our history, I was born with the name Kennedy and I don't want to lose it.
Aida: Clearly it's important. We arrived here when Kennedy was killed. We put the black and white television and I told my husband: "plug in the television" because we wanted to know how they killed him.
Giselle: So you moved?
Aida: Here I lived with my parents. I got married, I lived with my mother for eight years. I stayed one block from here, then my mom sold the house later, my father died when I was 19 years old. If I picked him up, he had an attack, a stroke. Suddenly one Sunday I was doing embroidery for my niece, I was emroidering her communion dress. It was just me alone with my mom and I believe he'd hit himself because my mom had very big pots with plants, a large patio. I thought he hit his head on a pot, a heart attack, a srtroke.
Giselle: But then your mom with seven children...

Aida: No, we were Dve at the time, and after we'd started to get married. My sister was married when we were here in this house. It was different because I'd remodeled because I'd started a business.
Giselle: What kind of business?
Aida: First, I put a kiosk. Do you know what that is?
Giselle: Yes.
Aida: Then I put a grocery, I made these sandwiches to sell, you see?
Giselle: And you made Argentine food in the grocery?

Aida: Yes
Giselle: When did you cook Lebanese food? With the family?
Aida: Sort of but, I didn't have time to cook much during [my spare] time. Lebanese food takes a lot of time to prepare.
Aida: I didn't make food, I made desserts.
Giselle: Ah, ok
Aida: But, if the kids came frome the school, especially on rainy days, I would go inside and prepare something to sell, later I sold [food] for a long time outside [the home], and I also had [helpers]. We'll do a thing: let's soak the bulgur for a whole and when it's soaking, then we'll look at photos. I am going to soak the bulgur so it puffs up.
Giselle: Where did you buy it?
Aida: In the *dietética*.
Giselle: I'm also noticing that you have za'atar and seven spices.
Aida: Where do you buy it? There is a *dietética* in Palermo called Damasco
Giselle: I saw it in a shop called... on Santa Fe. In the Arab bakery on Scalabrini Ortiz, it's the Arab and Armenian area... (I read) "*Pimiento de Jamaica*"
Aida: Because they also have *pimiento de Jamaica,* it's also from Lebanon. I also have some from Lebanon, this doesn't spoil, look! Because I'm the only one who eats it. Let's see what it says here...
Giselle: I love it! ¿And this is also in the same place?
Aida: I bought it in Lebanon, I bought a 1/4 kilo package and I was using it. They don't know those flavors here. I put just a little in the food. You see? We are going to prepare little breads and you will put [the za'atar] on them. Do you drink mate?
Giselle: ok
Aida: You see, every time I make *leben, laban* we say, it's honestly the same. *Laban* my mom said, because she said I couldn't pronounce it. I make a liter of milk, in this pitcher that holds a liter. When the milk boils, you let it cool, test it with your Dnger as if you were going to give warm milk to children. Now, in the summer, it gets nice fast. Whole milk not skim, I tried the skim milk and it didn't turn out.
Giselle: It needs the fat...
Aida: This I keep every time that I make a pot of this, for a liter of milk. How will I give this to you to take?
Giselle: Is it for labneh?
Aida: I bought it over at the Damasco market, mom also bought it there. That bakery has been there many years, it [was started by] the father of the man there now. I buy there, I buy a lot of things. I bought this, look: It's super delicious, I can't remember what it's called. You see? I bought it at Damasco. You can take this one home to make rice. When I was small, my mom made it in this way, I'll explain to you: grab a small pot and put half a cup of rice like this. But first you put some bits of butter in the pot, a clove of garlic cut very small until it's golden and put a handful of these - one or two spoonfuls for me, and leave those to golden as well.
Giselle: But is it rice or a grain?
Aida: It's a grain. One day I went and saw a woman ask for this to make rice, my mom couldn't get it here when we were kids, so she put this.
Giselle: Oh right, Vermicelli
Aida: No, angel hair pasta, the say. You see?
Giselle: A pasta?

Aida: I broke them with my hands, I browned them, I believe with this, but the real rice is made with this but they have them in the Arab bakeries, I don't know what they're called in Arabic.
Giselle: I am going to take a photo
Aida: Do you want to take a little?
Giselle: Yes, to look for it. I am curious.
Aida: I'll wrap up some grains now.
Giselle: So it's used to start?
Aida: I bought this at the bakery. They sell a plastic doodad, like a little plastic cup. I prepare it with this for the people who do not have it. I bought it a while ago, in the Winter, but you have to guard this like a relic, like it was made of gold! Every time you make it, keep around a cup. I add it more or less like this, with this you come back and do it again or that is that I now buy another milk one. I put the sugar in and I get this and I put it right here. I use this little bag but it doesn't get washed with soap or detergent - it's not washed with anything - rinse very well it with water because it maintains the acidic smell. I have to get another piece of fabric to make another. So after the *laban* sets but is not curdled, I keep a little for the next time and I put the rest right here with the liquid. I hang it right here because the [whey] *(suero)* will fall into the bowl/sink. You keep a little, like a cup of coffee, because if not, it's too heavy, and you leave it all night. I do it like this inside the oven - turned off, eh?! In the Winter, it takes longer, the milk is warmer [longer], but now in the Summer it happens right away. One day - I did it during the day, I left it at night, and in the morning it was done.
Giselle: But is it important to have a bit of warmth to ferment it?
Aida: It doesn't ferment, it just goes and drains the whey down. What's left is what they call the curd. I want to say that it's cut like a *queso liviano* but it turns out lovel, look, I didn't try it [yet]. It doesn't have salt, it doesn't have anything put in with a teaspoon. You're going to have a nice job now, so you will learn... because I did the little breads for Paula's birthday but Dlled them with things from here - cured meats, avocado. This is to save. Do you understand how it's done?
Giselle: Are there other ways?
Aida: This is the way my mother did it, but it always turned out well because she did it like this everyday, we were so many siblings/kids.
Giselle: Labneh?
Aida: She made food with *laban - el kebbe* made like little stuffed eggs with ground beef. She boiled it in this curd and then she put it in oil in a jar. That's how we ate when we just wanted to grab one of these. You know what that was? A delicacy! *El Kebbe* is like a meatball, it's like an egg, you knead it with your hands. I put ground beef and I stuffed it, so I boiled this Drst with the Dnished *laban.* Not this, the curd - we say - in a big pot made liters and liters and made a [large] amount. Then I had a large glass jar, so that it would keep well, I put some oil and this keeps in there. You make something like an eggplant that you make [as] you make *escabeche.* One thing like to keep [around] and when you are hungry, you eat this, or when you host, you have it in the fridge and you take it out and serve it. You don't have to [cook] it in that moment!
Giselle: Do you eat them cold?
Aida: Definitely, they were delicious that way. We fought to eat [them]. Occasionally, my mom did a lot of work and it was all for the boys to eat. You see?
Giselle: You used the labneh to eat other things as well?
Aida: No, we ate it like this, like yogurt.
Giselle: What part of the day? Morning? Afternoon?
Aida: Yes, they wanted to take them when there was a refrigerator, when I wasn't a poor dear

with ice. The ice bars came here because there was no big refrigerator before just for me. But I am accustomed, thank God, to having everything for cooking. I don't want to lack anything for cooking. You see how I have this up here? *Milanesas* when the kids come, they're prepared with pork or chicken. They're [plenty] to eat when I don't have time. We are going to leave this because we are going to need to soak the bulgur now.
Giselle: The kids like Lebanese and Argentine food the same?
Aida: Yes, the youngest, Paula, her mom is a teacher at the Maronite church. When it turned one hundred years old, they invited me to go, after I went to Lebanon, all the Maronites from there came with those tunics that they wear [and] those hats to celebrate. Here is half a kilo, I'm not going to do the stuffing, I'm going to make it smooth as it was served the other day, otherwise the filling comes out very heavy. So I am going to do the little squares like they did there, so I put half [the meat mixture], I don't have a scale, this puffs up a lot later. I have the coarsest bulgur that I sometimes [use to] make a dish with beef with little onions that is very good. Right here it says fine or coarse. I have everything loose here because I'm using it when I make salad.
Giselle: Do you always have bulgur?
Aida: This is coarse. You see?
Giselle: Is that not rice? What do you use it with?
Aida: No, with a dish that I make. My husband really liked it, with onion, chili pepper, pieces of beef like it was a stew (*guiso*), everything gets cooked, you add the tomato like a sauce. When it's very golden you add water, you leave it to boil, you cook it. My husband loved it.
Giselle: It's a dish of yours?
Aida: No, of my mother on cold days, a cold dish is easier, it's not expensive. Wheat has a lot of sustenance. Did you drink the mate?
Giselle: yes!
Aida: We had a mill right down here. When we were young, we'd go to buy the *trigo* there. They toasted it on the floor there. The mill was called Tarbush.
Giselle: The owners were Lebanese?
Aida: Yes, Arabs, but it seemed to me that they were Muslim.
Giselle: Is it still there?
Aida: No don't know if it's there, I don't go over there much. I know one is married to an Argentine woman, one of the youngest. That guy had a lot of sons and we would always go when we were young, when I lived right here, just six blocks away. My mom sent us to buy [stuff] and I ordered from Mirta, the mother of the girls. When she went to a high school that was a church, they sent her to buy. They left them to dry in the sun, then they put them through a machine. I don't remember well, I was just a girl, I did see that everything was fresh, there weren't other things to buy like there are now and are sold everywhere. You see? I drain them like this. -
Giselle: Yes, always with the hands!
Aida: A lot with the hands.
Giselle: Arab people, we cook with our hands.
Aida: It's because the hands tell us many things.
Giselle: It's better to feel it, no?
Aida: Yes, but you have to wash your hands!
Giselle: My mom is the same, especially with the bulgur, everything for kibbi [preparation].
Aida: What time is it? 7:15! In just a second, we['ve got to] start to season the meat. When my mom did it, sometimes she'd make it one day for another. She cooked (prepped?) and left it in

the refrigerator once there was a refrigerator. Did you drink it? Or me?
Giselle: It's your turn.
Aida: Are you done with mate?
Giselle: Yes
Aida: You see? I have all the little jars, they serve me well. I have powdered cinnamon, you see? I've separated them in my own way, not fancy jars or anything. I put the label on. You see?
Giselle: What's this? Oh! It's to write on it, perfect. I have a system like this too.
Aida: I like it like that.
Giselle: It's very organized.
Aida: I have all of the spices.
Giselle: What is this mix of seeds?
Aida: I made that and I forgot it was there. I found it the other day while I was cleaning. Egg shells, chía...
Giselle: ¡Cool!
Aida: Chía, notice how nice the smell is, I put it on salads.
Giselle: Yes, I have some.
Aida: I always have a lot of seeds.
Giselle: Are they always the same?
Aida: They talk about them on television and I take note and do it. I eat without salt, I put [seeds/spices] on top of vegetables so they taste like something nice. Now I've started to use black pepper a lot. I like mate with sugar because... people drink it bitter and I don't like it, because life is already bitter. Right now we're going to do something Giselle, while we drink mate, you want to eat a little pastry?
Giselle: [jaja] oh, not right now! Maybe after dinner?
Aida: No, we're not going to eat this with dinner, we're going to eat other delicious things. I made this to eat with the mate. You drink mate like crazy! How lovely that you drink mate!
Giselle: (risas) I really like it.
Aida: I love it. Do you make sweet things at home?
Giselle: Yes, I like making them.
Aida: You are going to make this. It's a great idea, it's simple, [you can make it] with any fruit. -
Giselle: Yes, it's simple.
Aida: I turned the oven off and I went to find you. I cook quickly, don't I? I've worked in the kitchen for many years...
Giselle: It's like... your body knows what to do.

Aida: I have a lot of vitality, a lot of strength, my daughter always says: "I'm not like you, mama," and that's fine but you know what happens? I pull the cart alone. Do you understand me? When I got married, I had a very tranquil husband, everything was fine. I [always] looked forward, I looked at the horizon ahead. I'm a Capricorn, 30th of December, I later read what they say about Capricorns... This is my brother that passed away. When he turned ninety, they sent me to call and we went to the party at Mar Del Plata. I don't want it to be late, I'm going to look for a little bag. Is the mate cold?
Giselle: No, I drank it all.
Aida: I want a tiny little bag. I keep this for empanadas, when I make milanesa.
Giselle: Do you use the same dough for *Fatay*?

Aida: No, I don't make homemade *empanadas*. It's a different dough.
Giselle: Now or always?
Aida: I did cooking classes but several years ago. These are seeds, my daughter loves these seeds. I buy them and I toast them.
Giselle: Something interesting - when I was cooking with the women at the church, they were mixing sunflower oil with olive oil.
Aida: Who? You went to see?
Giselle I helped before the event.
Aida: You went today?
Giselle Yes, but they are Argentine. Do you do that? Mix the oils?
Aida: Yes
Giselle: You mix the oils?
Aida: Yes
Giselle: They were telling me that they mix them so it won't have such a strong olive flavor.
Aida: Fill the little mate gourd, out the mate water in. Do you see this ground pepper? This is za'atar.
Giselle: Oh, really? But it's different, there's no sesame seed. -Aida: I bought it like that. It's bought loose, all ground.
Giselle: and it's called za'atar?
Aida: Oh! No, seven spices, I was wrong.
Giselle: And it's really popular in Argentina, seven spices?
Aida: It's very delicious. It's nice to make it at home as well. My daughter bought me a book that explains which spices to put in there and how much. You can take some from here, from BA, or do you have it there?
Giselle: The truth is that we have great spices, we're lucky. And now, in my little town, a shop-owner is buying/selling a very delicious za'atar. It's divine. She buys it from a couple in California and the couple buys the za'atar herb from Lebanon.
Aida: Do you have some to cook with here? Where are you going?
Giselle: Yes, I have a little kitchen and everything.
Aida: You have a little pot and everything? Try it. If you want to do it, it's easy, but you don't have all of the ingredients, right?
Giselle: Yes, that's the thing. But it's easy to take them with me.
Aida: Try it, if you don't like it.

Giselle: I am going to take another photo. Before I began my studies, I worked as a photographer. I'm glad you saw me at the Church with my camera.
Aida: Yes, for sure! I will explain to you in person and directly.
Giselle: Great, perfect.
Aida: I don't know what it's called in Arabic. Look, Giselle, come over here to cook so it doesn't get too late! Light the fire, butter not oil, a piece like this. Next the rice. I use the measuring cup a lot. If you make a whole cup, you put fifty grams of butter. A cup [the size you would use for] coffee with milk. You add the lard, brown a clove of garlic - chopped with a wooden spoon - you make it brown. Add what I gave you - water, salt, and calculate half a cup of rice. [Then] 3 times that of water. I do it like that, I'm a barbarian. You cook it until the water boils, then you add the rice. Washing it. Lower the heat so it cooks slowly. When it is dry [no water remains], it's cooked. Fifteen [minutes] for the rice, you turn off the heat, cover it, and let the rice swell. Then

eat it as you want, with *laban* or whatever you want!
Giselle: Perfect!
Aida: Let's [move] everything that's bothering me. I'll explain it to you like this so you understand, dear. It seems to me that I am going to teach you [how to make Arab food!
Giselle: OK, I'm very awake, after that mate!
Aida: I wanted to say that, that you drink mate very well!
Giselle: Do you like cooking sweets more [than savory foods]?
Aida: Sweets, more or less, if I can learn, I learn fast. Now I don't cook much. I am doing it [as] an act of love today because my back hurts a lot, I can't... That's why I laid down for a while, if I don't my body can't take it. You understand. It's not due to ill will, because I don't lack the will. I've worked so hard for many years, I don't know how I'll carry on...
Giselle: I am crying because of the onion.
Aida: You miss your husband!
Giselle: No, it's the onion!
Aida: Oh, yes, because of the onion, I know. I am very accustomed to it now.
Giselle: I keep getting more sensitive to onion, I think it's because my husband always cuts it for me in my house.
Aida: Really? You have a good husband.
Giselle: Yes
Aida: Is he American?
Giselle: Yes, he like to cook.
Aida: Yes, like all men.
Giselle: So we cook together.
Aida: my son-in-law also cooks a lot.
Giselle: Really? Do your daughters cook too? Do they cook Lebanese food?
Aida: Yes, my daughter that's on her way here makes it. I scoop out the eggplants with this gadget that my mother gave me.
Giselle It's very useful.
Aida: You scoop out the eggplant from a little piece [cut off] the top.
Giselle: And you add it to the mix?
Aida: That's what you ate earlier.
Giselle: oh! ok.

Aida: All of those things together - the squash, the seed, everything. You cook it slowly and everything is crushed. The onion is making me cry. Cut it in four. You see how I cut it, Giselle? Do half of it like this, you see how it is.
Giselle: You don't use a little cutting board?
Aida: Needless.
Giselle Ah, ok.
Aida: It used to be all by hand, this is archaic but it works.
Giselle: Yes, it works.
Aida: If it works, don't Dx it. You see? I do it like this, I take out everything hard, you cut it in the middle.
Giselle: There's, like, eight pieces.

Aida: I am going to have one without sugar and not any more. Enough mate! (Ruido de fotos) Are you taking a photo of me? I [am part of it] too?
Giselle: Yes! I will send you the photos.
Aida: You'll send them to me on the computer?
Giselle: Yes
Aida: I put a little bit of chili. Do you see how I clean the chili? I take out all the ugly stuff. We're going to put half of it. Put it like this, dear.
Giselle: Did your mom use bell peppers in kibbi?
Aida: Yes, I think she put them in. I don't remember much of that and I do it because it gives a nice flavor to the food.
Giselle: You change the recipes like you like them...
Aida: Precisely, the flavor of each [person] so that the food has that flavor.
Giselle: Yes
Aida: How does your mom say to you in Arabic...? (habla en árabe) [If] she wants to say, "how are you?"
Giselle: (Sahtein?) And how do you respond? This is like a... I don't know how to say the word 'heirloom.' A thing that is passed across generations, no?
Aida: What do I know? For the *madera*, to make holes. *Una gubia.*
Giselle: So you never use recipes?
Aida: No, it's already there in my memory and well-imprinted because [it's been] years.
Giselle: But do you have friends that ask for recipes?
Aida: No, recipes like this are in Arabic books. This guy's I don't like, because for me it doesn't have much flavor. According to each place, each country. The example here is the common *empanadas* eaten/made in one way in Córdoba, in Salta another, in Bariloche another, so according to the place. The towns integrate it into their customs at least. I do know that in Lebanon it must be the same.
Giselle: It depends on the cook, [too].
Aida: Well, thank you! (risas) *Shukraan*, like you said. Are you going to take a picture? I don't know why. That thing is older than 'the rosette.' You'll show it to your husband there? You have something like that if you have [kitchen] tools. Do you have something like that? I don't know how I'm going to look... They're cold in Arab shops to do this [task], but I have this one my mom gave me. I didn't buy these things. *Una gubia* they say. We put this on because my hand hurts.

Aida: No, it depends on the region where you live, the ingredients you have, because sometimes you are far from a city and you don't have [something], you'll sort it out with what you have.
Giselle: Do you believe the flavors of Argentina and Lebanon have mixed?
Aida: No, she put what is used there, but with time many things came from there because people started to ask, because the Lebanese community was large. They're in towns throughout the Republic. Excuse me, I'm crying because of this onion.
Giselle: But mixing the traditions.... the Argentine flavors...
Aida: There are parallels everywhere... You know what we're going to do, Giselle? Now I knead it and we'll see about the little breads and we'll do that, and the salad I am going to do. You don't want mate?
Giselle: I'm good, thank you!
Aida: I'll take this out now, I'm thirsty. I bought this right here. I'll take it out because I don't have space in the fridge.

Giselle: What do you call this in Spanish?
Aida: *Rabanito* (radish), so now [I'll] wash them, I am going to use a cutting board and cut them thin, cut them like this, and this stuff goes in the trash. You see how I'm doing it? You were green, now you have a job. You're my collaborator today, my kitchen helper!
Giselle: The sous chef, we say when you're in a restaurant. There is a chef and the man or woman on their side is the sous chef, the second [in command], thus.
Aida: Now we're going to put the spices. I am going to wash my hands. We'll take this [meat] out, now we're going to do it like this, look: First we'll put a little salt, I'm not going to put a lot, better to have too little than too much. Then we'll put this, the seven-spice mix.
Giselle: Just a little?
Aida: No, the flavor is delicious because the wheat absorbs it. You see?
Giselle: Ah, ok
Aida: Then we're going to do the za'atar, it's for something else. Now, we're going to put a little of this black pepper, I buy it ground. I have the gadget, but sometimes it doesn't work, it's easier like this and I just don't have the patience for this. Now we'll try it like this, raw, to see how the flavor is when I knead it.
Giselle: Do you make kibbi nayeh sometimes?
Aida: Yes, it's eaten like that but I don't eat anymore. My mom ground the meat when she made it and it had a different flavor. Now, instead, they put it through the machine and it doesn't make me want to eat it. We ate a lot with little raw onions on top.
Giselle: And where can I find Kibbi Nayeh?
Aida: They don't sell it.
Giselle: In restaurants? No?
Aida: Oh! Yes, it could be in restaurants. *La mejor medida que esta imposible.*
Giselle: The top. Just a little cumin?
Aida: Yes, I put just a little, one capful, not very full. We're going to put a little bit of oregano and a little bit of ground chili.
Giselle: What is this?
Aida: Ground chili.
Giselle: Is it spicy?
Aida: No, it's a teeny bit spicy to give it a little flavor. The more things you put in, the better. Are you filming this also?

Giselle: Yes.
Aida: Now I'm going to get my hands in gear, a little bit of water. I'm just missing the meat, the most important!
Giselle: How is it? The meat?
Aida: I already bought the meat. For 300 grams of this wheat, you have to put nearly a kilo of ground meat, 3 times the amount. But I'm not doing the stuffed ones today because I make it stuffed with nuts inside.
Giselle: With nuts inside?
Aida: Yes, I put nuts but I make the filling as if it were for *empanadas.* You see? With ground meat.
Giselle: And this is beef?
Aida: Yes, loin (*bola de lomo)*, take note, if you like, take note, if you want later, because it is a

tender meat and it does not have so much fat. I took it off and it's the same.
Giselle: That's better. Do you sometimes use lamb or never?
Aida: No, my mom made lamb but I don't use it because they don't like it and, besides, you can't find ground lamb here.
Giselle Is lamb more expensive?
Aida: No, I don't know, we ate lamb a lot, but *a la parrilla,* with what dad bought. It was used a lot when we were kids but later my dad made these foods, or in the oven, the kids didn't want it and didn't try it.
Giselle: Never ground lamb?
Aida: No, I don't know if mom used it. I don't remember because I was just a girl. She made it with this standard meat but when we were kids, it was my dad, and she made it to his taste as well.
Giselle: The truth is that I like the smell.
Aida: The aromas, the spices.
Giselle: Mixed with the meat.
Aida: In the past, we ate it raw with olive oil and raw, diced onions on top. And with the stuffed [*kibbi*] with the filling when it was sautéed, prepared as if it were the filling of the *empanadas.* My mother had a brother, the only brother she had, it was a sad and beautiful story at the same time, that goes: she had a brother, *varón nada más*, so just like her they took him there, from a place in town, a church that had a convent. The brother also, the two of them were together but when the woman went to go get [my mother] to adopt her, her brother had gone to live with another family, they took him. So a lot of time passed, the years flew by, mom came here, she was 15 years old when she married my father so my father knew her since she was very small, he went to there other town there, Nazaret. He already knew who she was and he was Dxed on her. So the years passed, my mom came here to Argentina. She knew her brother was with another family but he wanted to come here to Argentina and *se puso de polisón.* She wants to say that he was put up on a ship, he was 16 years old. He came here, he asked, he didn't meet anyone and he was living in Brazil as well, since they had another stepbrother from their father, the father, my grandfather. One of them was a priest and died of a plague, my mom's stepbrother. My mother, when she was pregnant, she started to look for him to see if she could see him. She was pregnant with my youngest sister. She went to the Lebanese consulate and they told her that he was in Argentina, and that she lived in Buenos Aires, so, she seized one day, only a few days before my sister was born, she went to Billinghurst street, where he was living, since he had married a ninety-year-old, a Gallegan woman, because he had stayed on the boat they called Utepia and started working as a busboy. Do you know what a *mozo* is? The one that picks up the glasses and attends to people, a boat busboy.
Giselle: And what are you looking for in this moment? just the flavor?
Aida: I am just trying it.
Giselle: I don't think I can. I have a delicate stomach.
Aida: If you're not used to it...
Giselle: When you make a little ball, are you looking for a certain feeling?
Aida: No, just to knead it together like when you put together and knead flour. She looked for the address and how he she had to get there and she went one day, very pregnant. My aunt came out, she saw my pregnant mother and she thought something bad. She went to look for her brother. You understand or no?
Giselle: I think so.

Aida: When she saw her, she shut the door on her. She didn't want her to come in, it was very hot. My sister was born November 30 and she was pregnant in early November. She went to the consulate to inquire and they told her his address. She always wanted to go, she roused herself one day and she went. When she saw her, she thought her husband had another woman and that she'd come pregnant and she didn't want to welcome her.
Giselle: Why didn't she tell her she was looking for her brother?
Aida: Yes, but she didn't understand her. My mother spoke checurriado. So she, my uncle's wife, took a good look at her, and they were *dos gotas de agua,* the two siblings looked a lot alike. Then he came home from work and they embraced, they cried. After so many years that they hadn't seen each other. This Gallegan lady went with very rich people to France, because they needed a young girl, she did laundry work during the Spanish war. The mother came with two daughters, so they needed a girl to take care of them. So for that, I accept her, I listen to her. Did you take a picture? (Risas)
Aida: You have a Canon? Very nice. Did I turn out pretty?
Giselle: Yes, very pretty.
Aida: I'll pass into posterity. Is this the first time you make this?
Giselle: Kibbi? No, my mom makes it a lot. The truth is that it's my favrite dish.
Aida: But is it different what your mom makes or is it similar?
Giselle: There's less spices, she doesn't use bell peppers, she makes it all with lamb.
Aida: Beforehand, they used it here, but not much lamb is seen [now]. We see a lot more port and it's much cheaper for people. Lamb is more expensive than beef, but it's not bad. It's bad if it gives [too much] bell pepper flavor. There are people that do it poorly. I put it because my mom put it, yes. It's definitely meat and wheat, Sometimes I don't put it but I out it in the stuffed [*kibbi*] but like today, I'm not making it stuffed. It has very little salt but it's good. Now I am going to the next thing: I'll finish with this and we make the salad. It's already 8! It can't be done with so much chatting! You have to come another day, if not to feed these people. We finished. Let's start with the little bread, Giselle.
Giselle: Do you want me to open them?
Aida: No, I wanted you to see this, I am going to put a lot of butter so it doesn't stick.
Giselle: There's a lot of butter here. I love butter.
Aida: Take advantage because you're skinny. Because when you're chubby, you don't want to eat more!
Giselle: It's always like this? Piece by piece?

Aida: And to bring it together. Your mom does it like this? There's not another...
Giselle: This is the most common way, no? Because there's a lot of ways to make kibbi.
Aida: It's the first time that I do it without the stuffing but I'll mark it, put oil and butter on top, so that it rises and does not break. It'll merge quickly because I didn't make it hard, this *chirlita*, I also do it as meatballs in the oven but we're going to give it the Arab shape.
Giselle: And why the water?
Aida: So that it melds together, like washing your hands, thank God we have hands!
Giselle: The most useful tools.
Aida: They serve to caress and to hit, to cook and everything. Me, when the kids come, I make the meatballs for my children. The girls also made them a lot. I try to have *milanesas* prepared. I make them with chicken, with pork.
Giselle And how come you don't use the onion with a little more onion water?

Aida: But it's already ground better because, if not, it's hard. Before, I chopped it all with my hands but it didn't give me the desired texture. Now, all the girls have kitchen appliances to cook, they don't do it by hand.
Giselle: We use technology a lot. Do you always cut it in the same way?
Aida: Yes
Giselle: Everything cut like this, No?
Aida: And that's why I did everything like that, so that it would be true *kibbi*. If it was all Argentina ladies who made the food (at the church), very good, very delicious, very Lebanese. When were you with them?
Giselle: I was there the day before.
Aida: And they had a kitchen?
Giselle: Yes, there is a kitchen that they yse for the kids, where normally they cook for the students. They told me that they cook Lebanese food for all of the special occasions.
Aida: Because they want to introduce the custom, even more with the priest that is there now. You see how it comes together? You didn't see that you have to wet the knife because it sticks.
Giselle: You want it to keep the diamond form...
Aida: Yes, a triangle. It looks good. Now, we're going to put little pieces of butter. Look how it melts in seconds with the warmth. Then I put oil.
Giselle: Olive oil?
Aida: Yes. ¡*C´est Fini Giselle*! Let's make the salad, Giselle. Then we'll do the little breads. We'll do them in the moment.
Giselle: So, do you cook Lebanese food on normal days?
Aida: Sometimes I also do it, not so much. I did it today in your honor, since you wanted to learn, since you seemed so nice to me. You get it? You're from a good family, I thought. You understand? This has so much value, also the roots of a human being. I'll take these out because they're not cut well... and you put it here. I see well without glasses.
Giselle: This is for *fattoush*?
Aida: Yes, she's a good Lebanese, your mom - how old was she when she went to live in the US?
Giselle: She was 11.
Aida: She learned from her mother?

Giselle: Yes, everything. When I was young, when my grandmother took care of my brother and I, we always ate Lebanese food. I have memories of my grandmother associated with certain smells.
Aida: You learned, you already know how to do it.
Giselle I want to be a good helper!
Aida Who knows how much I'll get out of it? How much *masare*?
Giselle: How much what?
Aida: It means money in Arabic! (Risas)
Giselle: Just love...
Aida: Right here, I have the book that my daughter bought me. I made photocopies. There's *shawarma*, *hummus*, Persian rice - that's delicious with chicken. I think that I have, that I have more photocopies to give you. You can make it later at home!
Giselle: How great! What luck, perfect.
Aida: I made them because everyone asked for them. You can do one part and I'll do another.
Giselle: Did your mom make *fattoush*?

Aida: She made it for me when we were kids, then I forgot. I didn't remember how it was, so my daughter gave me this book for a birthday. It's lovely. At any rate, when you come another time, if you come to Buenos Ares one day, I'll buy you one and give it to you as a gift.
Giselle: Yes! Tell me the name?
Aida: You can get it from the internet - chef Abdala.
Giselle: He's from Lebanon?
Aida: Yes, he came when he was a boy. I am going to put a CD of a Lebanese [singer], Arabic, that my dad listened to when we were kids.
Giselle: My aunts and my mom always [listened] to this music. My aunt loves to dance and we always danced together when this music came on. ¿Who is it?
Aida: Her name is Fairuz, my dad cried with emotion. How lovely you are, I love you! You remind me of myself when I was young. I, too, was a girl once... I bought this one day when I went with Paula to a Syrian institution and they recorded these records and I bought them, in 2007. I listened to them and said, "Ay! Fairuz!." I called a cousin-sister [one day], who lives in Córdoba, the only one that is left, and she said to me "are you listening to Fairuz?" She is eighty-odd years old.

Mariana [SPANISH]

Giselle: ¿Cómo aprendiste a hacer hummus?
Mariana: Bueno, en mi familia se hacia
Giselle: ¿Era solamente tu abuelo el libanes?
Mariana: En mi casa esto se hacía pero yo nunca lo registraba como algo distinto, exótico para mí esto es mayonesa, en mi casa esto es como queso crema, es diario y mi abuela lo hacía todo el tiempo no te digo todos los días pero nosotros íbamos al colegio a la mañana y a la tarde y al mediodía íbamos a almorzar a lo de mi abuela, todos los días, porque vivía en la otra cuadra del colegio y nosotros llegamos y había esto niños envueltos. Nuestros amigos no les gustaba o no entendían, ellos estaban esperando patitas de pollo, comida más de nenes, después a medida que crecí empecé a registrar que esto no era normal en todas las casas y que tenía que ver con la comida que le gustaba a mi abuelo, mi abuela es de origen italiano, nada que ver, pero aprendió a hacer esta comida para agasajar a mi abuelo porque a él le gustaba, pero es comida que mi abuela aprendió a hacerla de su cuñada, de su suegra, que ella no tenía nada que ver porque ella era argentina, sus papas argentinos, sus abuelos italianos, pero mi abuela aprendió para agasajar a su marido, que era la comida que a él le gustaba comer, mi abuelo tenía un negocio de telas y cuando venía los mediodías a comer y mi abuela le había hecho esto, la cara se le iluminaba llegaba y había comida árabe y mi abuelo sonreía con la mirada. A medida que empecé a crecer empecé a registrar las recetas y las formas que cocinaban, Ahí está el mortero hacia kebbe crudo y en la casa que teníamos había uno que vino del Líbano pero era imposible de trasladar y cuando lo trataron de trasladar se rompía entonces quedo en casa y se perdió.
Giselle: La familia de mi mama lo comieron así pero era muy difícil de encontrarlo en los restaurantes.
Mariana: Yo lo comía solo cuando lo hacia mi abuela, cuando lo hago yo o en Zarkis. ¿Fuiste a Zarkis? es un restaurante armenio en Palermo muy famoso y ahí lo hacen muy rico.
Giselle: Y hay que esperar mucho tiempo, eso me conto mucha gente.
Mariana: Si es muy difícil a veces hay que esperar dos horas
Giselle: ¿Pero hacen Kebbe crudo?
Mariana: Si lo hacen espectacular y Mi abuela lo hacía ahí con la piedra. Muchas veces mi abuela para hacerlo rápido usaba garbanzos de lata, pero no es lo mismo después cuando me metí en gastronomía empecé a investigar y a conocer y a aprender y me di cuenta que el garbanzo de lata no tiene nada que ver con el garbanzo fresco. Leí mucho de hummus .Tengo un montón de amigas judías con abuelas y madres que cocinan y saque muchas cosas de ahí leyendo probando en internet, hay gente que le pone comino a mí no me gusta es muy fuerte
Giselle: Hay mucha gente que no le gusta el comino.
Mariana: Es que invade mucho, hasta que llegue a mi receta hay con aceite de oliva sin aceite, a mí me gusta que se sienta el gusto a garbanzo al tagine, a la pasta de sésamo le dicen tagine. Es del Líbano muy difícil de conseguir garbanzos ahora me está costando mucho. ¿Vos fuiste de al "Dabbang", el restaurant?
Giselle: Fui hace dos noches
Mariana: Es increíble es mi restaurant preferido creo que del mundo, tengo muy buena onda con Mariano, el dueño, el me pasa muchos contactos y hoy justo me paso un contacto de unos productores del campo de garbanzos, que viene del interior del país traerlos es muy caro. Para poder traerme un camión tengo que comprar quinientos kilos primero son veinte cinco mil pesos, entonces voy buscando productores chiquititos, pruebo y compro hasta que pueda comprar eso a parte si lo tenés en bolsas o lugares cálidos hace bichitos por eso prefiero comprar menos

cantidad más seguido pero después todo lo que uso es de acá, el aceite de oliva este justo hoy lo compre porque no tenía más, pero si no uso uno que hace mi primo en el campo, el pimentón es de Catamarca igual yo lo vendo sin nada que la gente le ponga aceite de oliva si quiere o no. Vos vivís en Estados Unidos, viste que allá el hummus es muy conocido bueno, no sé dónde vivís pero allá hay "whole food" en esos lugares hay mucho.
Giselle: Si es conocido pero es otra cosa
Mariana Es tipo snack, yo sigo estas marcas mira que nada que ver
Giselle: Pero no son muy buenos
Mariana: De un montón de cosas "rose.. (9:20) (no se entiende) Original "Lima bine" hay muchas marcas, esto acá no está en el supermercado
Giselle: Y Por eso empezaste
Mariana: Sobre todo porque todo el mundo que lo prueba le gusta, porque cocino árabe de toda la vida, tuve acá un restaurant árabe que lo vendí a un sirios, si querés después podemos pasar no sé si te sirve sacar fotos ahí
Mariana: Si, a mí no me gusta
Giselle: Hay un montón de restaurantes sirios
Mariana: Son mas no fast food pero son más al paso, menos calidad, barato, shawarma, kebab la calidad no está muy buena, a todo el mundo le gustaba el hummus que hacía, a mí también me gustaba y lo empecé a vender y mi objetivo es venderlo, no te digo así masivamente pero poder llevarlo a mercados chiquitos que la gente lo conozca más porque es muy rico tiene muy buena calidad el tema es poder mantener la calidad y poder hacer cantidad pero manteniendo la cantidad y eso a veces no es tan compatible y si haces calidad no sé si podes hacerlo tan masivo.
Giselle: Estoy de acuerdo, en este caso es una cosa de valor a un buen precio ¿son individuales que lo compran o negocios?
Mariana: Si porque no le pongo ningún aditivo, ni conservante. Es muy rico muy sano pero no lo puedo vender todavía. No quería que la estética de la marca sea árabe, viste que el logo tiene la frutita del cedro, es de un árbol que mi abuela le gustaba mucho. Esa es la futa se llama piña acá, quería que sea más personal. Si después alguien me pregunta yo cuento la historia de las raíces me gustaba que el nombre sea mío, espere mucho tiempo, hay que dedicarle.
Giselle: ¿Y cómo llegaste al momento de empezar?
Mariana: Por necesidad primero trabaje un año en un restaurante se terminó el contrato, ella ya empezó el jardín y me quedo más tiempo.
Giselle: ¿Cuándo empezaste?
Mariana: Hace dos semanas, la marca la tengo hace bastante nunca tenía tiempo nunca era el momento, excusas hasta que empecé.
Giselle ¿Y cómo anda?
Mariana: Muy bien, el de berenjena, el babaganuche ¿viste que rico? No quiero hacerlo tan yanqui quiero que sea más tradicional probé varios sabores, pero este es el más rico, este lo voy a tener siempre voy a ir variando, el de calabaza es muy rico
Giselle: Y para combinar
Mariana: Y si voy a poner el babaganuche y en el restaurant hacíamos ¿conoces el que se llama "Nujamara"? Ese es espectacular pero como tiene la red peppers son muy peligrosos porque fermentan muy rápido.
Giselle: Compre uno en el Medio Oriente
Mariana ¿Y estaba acido?

Giselle: Si muy yo note que la tapa estaba inflada, eso me pasaba en el restaurante era el que más le gustaba a la gente, lo hacía en el día pero a la gente le encantaba
Giselle: y también que conozcan el hummus real
Mariana: Si, porque mucha gente te dice que lo conoce pero es porque viajo y es otra cosa, no es este que está hecho con el tagine, acá mucha gente lo hace con pasta de maní
Giselle: Lo leí en un artículo
Mariana: Nada que ver, en Sarkis es rico el hummus que hacen pero usan maní y comino
Giselle: Porque el tagine es caro
Mariana Y pero este es un producto distinto yo lo vendo a noventa pesos, casi cinco dólares, ¿es caro?
Giselle: No, es justo ocho, creo para un producto bien hecho.
Mariana: Mi idea es que se coma esto, lo que estaba en el plato es la porción que yo vendo no es mucho. Pero charlando con un amigo te lo comes, una semana en la heladera dura.
Giselle ¿La gente compra más de uno?
Mariana: Si, es lo que tengo que empezar a hacer, poner un día de compras, día de cocción, día de delivery, me vuelvo loca porque pensá que yo hago las compras, lo cocino, lo reparto, contesto por Instagram pero bueno acabo de empezar, ahora tengo que hacer todo yo, ahora es así, pero está yendo bien, le gusta mucho a la gente por suerte.
Giselle: Vas a tener clientes regulares
Mariana: Ya tengo eso, ya tenía desde antes porque me quedaron desde el restaurante cuando yo empecé a cocinar en el primer lugar que trabaje acá, que no se si fuiste el Club Sirio Libanes
Giselle: No, tengo que ir
Mariana: Es lindo el que está en Recoleta, en Pacheco de Melo
Giselle: He escrito algunas veces
Mariana: ¿No te contestaron?
Giselle: No, pero bueno todavía puedo comer
Mariana: Para comer estaría bueno que puedas conocer al dueño, te voy a mostrar el libro, este es el dueño, ahora es mucho más viejo, yo trabaje ahí seis meses
Giselle: ¿Y la comida?
Mariana: Iba mucha gente de la colectividad Sirio Libanesa, mucha y mi abuela iba se come bien, la cocina es horrible pero eso no se ve.
Giselle: ¿Es diferente en este momento? Alguien me conto que ha cambiado la estructura
Mariana: Porque hay muchos más controles.
Giselle: ¿Ah sí? ¿Podes hacer la comida en casa para vender?
Mariana: Yo hago
Giselle: En Estados Unidos no es legal yo quiero hacer esto
Mariana: Acá también es ilegal, yo lo hago pero de manera ilegal no tengo acá permiso mi casa no está acondicionada.
Giselle: Yo estaba haciendo cenas.
Mariana: Me encanta, eso se usa mucho acá
Giselle: En un sitio que se llama Eat With en todo el mundo. Tienes que mirarlo
Mariana: Lo voy a buscar
Giselle: En todos los lugares en Paris, muchos países tienen y yo empecé a hacerlo, muchas personas en mi jardín, una cena libanesa porque no tenemos comida árabe yo vivo en un pueblo chiquito justo al lado de Portland
Mariana: ¿Cómo se llama?

Giselle: Hood River es a una hora de Portland, Oregón es el estado, justo al norte de California
Mariana: ¿Es cerca de Canadá Vancouver?
Giselle: Si tenemos California, Oregón; Washington, Canadá, tenemos un estado pero no es muy grande
Mariana: Porque una amiga que vive en Vancouver hizo un road trip y ahora que dijiste Portland fue, tiene muchas fotos es fotógrafa y fue a Portland, es muy lindo lo que me acuerdo yo quiero ir
Giselle: Conducimos para Vancouver
Mariana: ¡Hermoso!
Giselle: Y la comida muy bien porque tiene de todo, es como en Los Ángeles.
Mariana: ¿Y dónde vos vivís hay comida árabe- Libanesa?
Giselle: No como somos diez mil personas tenemos siete, ocho restaurantes muy buenos.
Mariana: ¿Es un pueblo que hay mucha granja?
Giselle: Si, tenemos mucha agricultura, mucho vino,
Mariana: ¡Que rico!
Giselle: Es un lugar de viñedos y mucha cerveza justo estamos al lado de Portland, entonces la gente siempre me está pidiendo por favor
Mariana: Acá hay uno que se llama Cook up muy parecido
Giselle: La gente puede organizar en su casa
Mariana: Invitas a tu casa
Giselle: y es lindo cuando estas viajando como yo siempre es bueno cenar en un hogar en una casa. Mi cena fue más gente del pueblo, a quienes yo conozco más o menos, gente que no quieren comida libanesa quieren algo diferente de los siete restaurantes que siempre estamos comiendo, fue divino
Mariana: ¿Y productos tenés?
Giselle: Si tenemos tiendas árabes en Portland
Mariana: ¿A cuánto estas?
Giselle: A una hora de auto, tengo muchos amigos, un día recibí un correo del departamento de salud que decía: “No podes hacerlo”
Mariana: ¿Cómo se enteraron?
Giselle: Me dijeron que es un evento público, no es un evento privado, y lo estás promocionando al público, hay maneras de hacerlo entonces estoy pensando cómo puedo seguir.
Mariana: De manera más privada
Giselle: Yo creo que si mando correos a mis amigos y que diga: ¿Querés hacer una cena para ocho personas para vos y tus amigos?
Mariana: Que no lo digan, que no lo reenvíen. ¡Qué lindo Oregón! ya vamos a ir al Oeste y podemos cocinar.
Giselle: Y ahora tiene una amiga. ¿Entonces cocinas otra cosa libanesa?
Mariana: Cocino un montón catering de shawarma y falafel, también voy a las casas alguien festeja algo y me llama, tengo la máquina, no lo tengo acá justo te puedo mostrar fotos y hago eventos y aparte cocino de todo la gente me encarga picadas, tipo el mezze, o voy yo y preparo toda la mesa el tabule, ensalada Belén con berenjenas, morrones, castaña de cajú
Giselle: Eso no conozco
Mariana: Ahí en el libro esta, los red peppers en el horno con mucho aceite, azúcar y ají molido y cuando sale lo mesclas con cajú, pasas de uvas y hojitas de menta.
Giselle: ¿cómo se llama?

Mariana: Belén Salad
Giselle: Cuando estabas describiendo tu juventud hablando de las cosas que no estaban en la casa de tus amigos, el laban siempre en la escuela me decían: ¿Qué es eso? ¿Queso crema?
Mariana: ¡Tal cual!
Giselle: Y zatar y al fin del día un "managush" pan con zatar
Mariana: Eso acá no hay no lo encuentro
Giselle: Yo encontré en Damasco. En Scalabrini Ortiz que nos encontramos en una iglesia San Marón estaba con una mujer de ochenta y seis años y me invito a su casa, ella siempre compra ahí las especias.
Mariana: después te voy a mandar la receta, es tan rico
Giselle: tenemos en verano un montón de berenjenas y morrones de los granjeros
Mariana: Yo ahora estoy tratando de comprar orgánico de comprar a los productores más chiquitos, es más caro es más difícil que te lo traigan, viste a veces todo es por el tiempo. En el catering el shawarma o kebab lo servimos con una salsa de yogurt hay veces que voy al evento y la gente te pide mayonesa "¿tenés mayonesa?" O "ponele mayonesa" y les digo: "Esto no es mayonesa" ¿"Que es? Me dicen, "yogurt" les digo. Hay gente que piensa yogurt igual a breakfast vainilla o frutilla lo hago o natural le pongo ajo, oliva, pepino y tagine para el shawarma, que me gusta, pero la gente hay cosas que no conoce y no puede salir de la estructura de yogurt igual a desayuno. Es lo que más me gusta cocinar porque es lo que más me gusta comer, no me canso de comer esto, hace dos semanas que todos los días comemos hummus, hoy fuimos a la quinta que te dije que vengas y mis suegros son muy italianos, mi suegra es un personaje y hoy había unos tomates que hizo ella en el verano, que ya los guarda para todo el año, estofado, pasta, aceitunas y nosotros llevamos esto, les fascina y lo mesclas y va con todo. Yo ahora a cada lugar que voy lo llevo. ¿Vos conocías a Ali de "pick up the fork" o la conociste acá? ¿Cómo la conociste?
Giselle: Estaba buscando comida libanesa en Buenos Aires
Mariana: Yo no la conozco pero le conozco el blog y le escribí y me contesto justo antes de ayer, me dijo que le lleve que lo va a probar tiene muchos following
Giselle: Muy amable ella.
Mariana: Ella creo estaba viajando y se quedó acá se enamoró del lugar, estaba estudiando me dijo y volvió a Chicago luego a Buenos Aires y un día se quedó.
Mariana: Es de Israel ella creo
Giselle: Si su familia sí, es de Chicago, tiene una hermana que vive en Israel, es muy buena onda ustedes van a get along
Mariana: ¿Y allá que haces? ¿A qué te dedicas para vivir? ¿Cocinas?, ¿Sos FreeLancer?
Giselle: Si, soy freelancer la verdad que estoy cansada, un día como hoy hago tres trabajos es tiring, estoy tratando de hacer una o dos cosas, hago diseño, video, fotos y un poquito de diseño de los sitios, necesitaba sitios para mi propio negocio entonces aprendí por internet después la gente de mi pueblo me preguntaba para hacerlo para los negocios, también soy una maestra de baile
Mariana: ¡Qué bueno! ¿Qué baile?
Giselle: Jazz, hip hop contemporary
Mariana: Acá hay mucho ¿viste algo?
Giselle: Si un poquito seis semanas, espere hace mucho tiempo al final no es mucho tiempo.
Mariana: Es un mes y medio pero en realidad lo tuyo es más el cine la gastronomía, ahora estás haciendo el master de gastronomía es teórico o de cocina?

Giselle: Teórico, historia cultura Mi tesis va a ser como cuarenta páginas de ese tema de la cocina libanesa en pero yo encontré un hombre que tiene una organización que se llama CELIBAL, muy amable ese hombre muy libanes pero es de Córdoba pero sus dos padres son del Líbano es cien por ciento libanes
Mariana: ¿estuviste con él?
Giselle: Fui a la oficina a ver si podíamos hablar un poquito y es muy amable y encontré a su esposa también es libanesa, ella me estuvo ayudando a pasar este cuestionario, que te voy a pasar a vos también, es un cuestionario que va a pasar a mucha gente en el continente no solamente en Argentina, tiene contactos de todos lados en América Latina ,quiero hacer esa tesis y en el tesis voy a tener unas (no se entiende la palabra en minuto 47:17 aproximadamente) vos, esa mujer, Sergio. Estaba pensando, voy a poner mi historia también.
Mariana: Vos tenés que conocer a Tito Abdala, mañana le voy a escribir a ver si está en el restaurante, no vayas a cenar, anda tipo seis de la tarde y pregunta si está ¿sabes dónde es? en el Club Sirio Libanes, pero el de Recoleta en Pacheco de Melo cerca de las Heras, ¡Donde estas parando vos?
Giselle: Justo al lado del Parque, al lado del cementerio
Mariana: Ah, estas a cinco cuadras, es la sede del Club Sirio Libanes, tiene el restaurant que parece la película Aladino, todo muy árabe, pero estaría muy bueno que puedas hablar con Tito Abdala, es muy simpático y es uno de los primeros acá de la colectividad que cocina de familia libanesa manteniendo tradiciones.
Giselle: No hay muchos,
Mariana: Es que hay que buscar mucho ya se pierde porque somos todos nietos o bisnietos y si no se transmitió se pierde. En mi familia mi tío cocina también árabe pero yo soy la única que mantiene vivo el sabor porque la vi a mi abuela y me crie con él,
Giselle: Me parece muy interesante, estoy siguiendo con esa tradición pero no estoy haciendo lo mismo con la comida de mi papá
Mariana ¿Qué es?
Giselle: Mi papa es Americano, es estadounidense no hay cultura muy fuerte con mi papa es estadounidense hace cosas de California, pescado, barbacoa pero estoy mucho más interesada y siento que soy libanesa
Mariana: Yo también, mis hermanos se vuelven locos con esta comida pero no les intereso involucrarse de algún lugar en las raíces de su familia por parte de mi papa son españoles, en Argentina la mayoría son españoles, italianos, judíos, árabes, sirios libaneses, pero la mayoría son españoles e italianos y a mí no me interesa mucho buscar sobre mi parte española o italiana, la que me llama la atención es la libanesa.
Giselle: ¿Por qué?
Mariana: Yo creo que es por la comida por la relación que hay con la comida y la mesa, mi familia por parte de mi mamá hay muchos códigos y cosas con las que me siento identificada, una mesa grande, que siempre haya lugar para uno más es muy árabe, muy armenio, muy libanes yo tengo muchos amigos armenios y trabaje con una mujer armenia en un restaurant que es el que estoy trabajando freelance. En mi casa vivimos siempre con nuestros abuelos y la presencia de mi abuelo era muy fuerte y siempre había lugar para uno más en la mesa y en mi familia todo pasa en la mesa, empezás almorzando y terminas cenando y no te diste cuenta y estuviste todo el día en la mesa pero no es por lo que se come, es el lenguaje que te relacionas no es muy fácil de explicar es como una comida que está pensada para compartir. Todas las colectividades porque yo voy a lo de mi novio y sus abuelos son italianos es espectacular algún día que los conozcas,

tienen las gallinas, los huevos. Para mí lo que tiene el árabe es muy generoso siempre hay un lugar para uno más, me identifico con la cultura árabe y hoy tiene cosas muy malas en el mundo, en la historia actual pero yo no creo que haya vivido en una casa machista, todo lo contrario, mi abuela lo hizo por amor querer aprender la comida que le gustaba a su marido no lo hizo porque mi abuelo la obligo o por mucho menos, simplemente por amor para agasajar a la persona que quería y yo lo hago por él, por vos que te conozco hoy por mis amigas y no me sale hacerlo de otra manera. Puede ser como vos decís que pasa algo con la cultura libanesa, él tiene uno de sus mejores amigos es de familia siria, si bien hay muchas cosas, de hecho de casualidad la familia del amigo de él conoce a mi abuelo porque la empresa textil de mi abuelo era muy conocida, pero la gente se acuerda de mi abuelo porque era un tipo muy generoso, era un tipo que ayudaba mucho a la gente. Él es de un pueblo de Buenos Aires que se llama Rauch, es un pueblo muy pobre, y el vino a Buenos Aires y empezó a traer a los hermanos, eran once, los ayudo mucho y con la familia del pulga, que son sirios, hay muchas cosas que no tengo nada que ver el papa es muy machista, el rol de la mujer, las hermanas, el amigo de pulga esta re loco, le dicen loco de hecho. Él trabaja en el Club Sirio Libanes, en el de Saavedra, para mí no tiene nada que ver con lo que viví en mi familia, te juro no tienen tanta cultura en la gastronomía, en la mesa, es distinto. Cuando viaje a New York me contacte con primos directos que tienen el apellido de mi abuelo y me encontré allá, yo ya los había visto acá una vez que vinieron de luna de miel y me quede re encariñada y siento que los quiero un montón. Hoy cuando venias vos, le escribí a Bernard Asmar y lo vi muy poco pero hay algo que me conecta, me une y a mi tío le pasa lo mismo cada vez que viaja trata de ir a verlo pero creo en mi caso tiene mucho que ver la comida, me fascina esta comida, comerla, cocinarla, hacerla para el otro me encanta, poner la mesa, los platitos, invitar gente. Me parece que lleva mucho laburo, mucho trabajo pero que lo estás haciendo por el otro, es muy difícil de explicar.
Giselle: Te entiendo completamente
Mariana. Es como una comida que alcanza siempre para que venga alguien más, a mi aparte me encanta y le tengo mucho respeto también a las recetas, yo soy cocinera y a lo mejor te gusta jugar, inventar, pero no esto yo lo hago, leí, investigue, no me da igual el maní que el sésamo, de alguna manera siento que estoy como honrando a mi abuelo en esto, yo estoy segura que le encantaría mi keppe crudo, que le encantaría que yo tenga un mortero. Durante muchos años cocine cosas, no que no me gustan pero más por la plata o por laburar pero esto me encanta lo hago y me sale muy fácil pero porque lo disfruto mucho es un proyecto que se me ocurrió cuando fui a New York porque veía hummus en todos lados, whole food y la gente comía con chips, zanahoria, pan, en un sándwich y digo: ¿Cómo en Buenos Aires la gente no lo conoce? ¿Por qué solo mi familia lo conoce? ¿Y por qué tiene que ser tan exótico? Si lleva garbanzos, aceite, limón, ajo, si no querés no le pones más nada. Y lo tuve ahí que no le daba bola al proyecto y cuando nació Jacinta, lo empecé como que más ganas me dio, de un día para el otro por la necesidad porque se había terminado mi contrato en un restaurant dije: "Ya está listo" y a la gente le encanta y va a ir mejorando va a ir creciendo. ¿Querés que vayamos a cocinar el hummus? Podemos seguir charlando yo estoy para lo que vos quieras.
Giselle: Estoy muy contenta de ayudarte.
Mariana: Obvio, ahora me ayudas con el ajo. ¿Te gusta con mucho ajo, poco?
Giselle: Con mucho
Mariana: Acá una sola, de todas las ventas que hice, me dijo con mucho ajo. Ustedes tienen al "zaar", es lo mejor pero no llega acá. A mí me lo trajeron una vez de afuera.

Giselle: Tenemos una marca que es un hombre gordito y es naranja con morrón, pero es demasiado duro y por eso también cuando la gente está tratando hummus por primera vez..
Mariana: Lo dejo en remojo toda una noche, lo voy a hacer para mañana
Giselle: ¿Cocinas comida libanesa en ocasiones especiales?
Mariana: Con tiempo y mesclado con otras cosas.
Giselle: ¿Cómo qué?
Mariana: Mesclo recetas, a veces voy a un asado y llevo ensalada Belén, que te dije, y gusta porque son berenjenas y los peppers, son sabores que acá gustan mucho, esto queda así toda una noche con baking soda.
Giselle: hablas muy bien ingles no
Mariana: hablamos, si
Giselle: Mejor que mi español
Mariana: No, te juro que no, tu español es perfecto.
Giselle: Puedo comunicarme, eso es lo importante.
Mariana: Eso es lo importante, totalmente
Giselle: ¿Qué es una quinta?
Mariana: A big house where you are the owner, está buenísimo porque es diferente a la vida que haces en tu casa, es para ir los fines de semana.
Giselle: ¿ya tenés todos los pedidos?
Mariana: Si hago y vendo. El primer secreto es que el garbanzo este todavía caliente que se pase de la cocción, si dejo que se enfrié se pone duro y no logro la cremosidad que yo quiero. Lo primero que hacemos es procesar solo y tiene que quedar puré y a parte empiezo a mesclar yo lo hago a ojo
Giselle: ¿Dónde compras el tagine?
Mariana: Lo conocí cuando trabajaba es el que trae todos los productos de todos los que cocinan árabe. Vamos a ponerle ajo y después vamos probando, jugo de limón y sal esto así se hace en realidad para que la sal quede bien mesclada.
Giselle: Con la mitad del limón
Mariana: Le puse uno y medio pero tiene que estar fría un día, no sé por qué pero un día me lo dijeron y me gusto como queda.
Giselle: ¿Está bien si saco fotos?
Mariana: Obvio, Lo que vos quieras.
Giselle: Mi sueño es hacer un libro de cocina que contengan gente como vos, uno dos o tres recetas de mariana y después cuatro o cinco personas de Argentina cuatro o cinco personas de Uruguay pero todos Libaneses para ver cómo es la comida libanesa en el mundo, porque yo estoy de acuerdo con eso necesitamos mantener la tradición y cambia por generaciones lugares
Mariana: en Israel comen hummus pero lo comen distinto, varía según la familia según todo para mí es muy importante que se conozca porque es algo que vale mucho y no se puede perder. Pásame el aceite, de girasol muy poco y depende es a ojo ¿ves como esto se empieza a poner duro? Falta agua anda tirándole agua, mira probálo vas a ver
Giselle: Parece helado
Mariana: Se le siente el limón, yo creo que el agua fría se pone porque la maquina aporta mucho calor y cambia un poco el sabor porque antes se hacía a mano como el morter y me parece que el agua fría se pone porque también leí hay muchas recetas sobre todo en los países árabes donde hacen cantidades de hummus ponen cubitos de hielo me parece que es por eso. Ahora lo mesclamos

Giselle: Una cosa que también es difícil para mí he hablado con muchos argentinos estoy haciendo lo de la comida libanesa "¡ah bueno!" hay muchos restaurantes Sirios
Mariana: no es lo mismo, yo amo la comida armenia pero es otra cosa. La armenia de Sarkis es parecida a la comida árabe que comíamos en mi casa son sabores muy amigables para la gente que no es árabe y no lo comió siempre
Giselle: Voy a cambiar mi manera porque siempre lo pongo todo junto
Mariana: Antes lo hacía todo junto, mi abuela lo hacía todo junto a lo mejor porque las maquinas no son tan fuertes y yo no la quiero romper todavía y ahora lo vamos a procesar otra vez. Vamos aprobarlo y ahí nos fijamos la sal, le falta limón, le falta ajo y le falta sal yo lo voy probando, por eso no lo peso porque no es siempre igual.
Giselle: Creo que esta esto es algo que aprendimos en la casa con nuestras mamas mi abuela, mi tía mi mama, mi abuela no está porque murió siempre lo estaba probando por horas, cuando no estoy cocinando comida libanesa cuando estoy cocinando otra cosa olvidaba de probarlo pero con comida libanesa es a habit, hicimos mucha comida en los feriados, en navidad tenemos niños envueltos
Mariana: ¿Hoja de parra o repollo?
Giselle: En uva
Mariana: Acá le decimos hoja de parra
Giselle: ¿Y la otra que es?
Mariana: Repollo, that's my favorite
Giselle: Quiero probarlo
Mariana: Pulga's family his aunt is from the south of Italy, from Calabria.
Giselle: Me parece que hay similitudes entre Argentina, árabes e italiana
Mariana Y español también la parte árabe que está en el Mediterráneo, Grecia, el producto es muy similar, berenjenas, aceitunas, tomates y pepinos
Giselle: Nosotros hacemos "monagie", es un plato egipcio es como una sopa en inglés, la planta es yute, tenés pollo, pan árabe y arroz, el pan árabe crocante y haces como queres. En nuestra mesa es como un juego a ver en qué forma lo haces, mi abuelo siempre lo mismo. Yo corto la cebolla, el pollo, la sopa tiene un sabor muy raro.
Mariana: ¿Muchas especias?
Giselle: Es una planta que no he comido en otra cosa, se usa para hacer "rope", es verde
Mariana: Here the use yute for the "Alpargatas". Aprendí mucho de libros, leyendo, trabajando y probando, mi abuela hacia los niños envueltos en succhini with tabule beef and rice, "babaganush", hummus, tabule, ensalada Belén pero la estrella de mi abuela era el "keppe"
Giselle: ¿Siempre de carne o de cordero?
Mariana: Cordero no
Giselle: No es común
Mariana Acá, no. Probalo, ahí le falta un poco de ajo y tiene mucho tagine, ¿lo sentís?
Giselle: Si
Mariana: Vamos a ponerle más ajo
Giselle: ¿Ponía morrón tu abuela?
Mariana: Mi abuela ponía en el cocido, en el crudo only "bulgur" and onion. She was the whole day cooking, olive oil she used to cut the onion very thin, arriba aceite de oliva y hojas de menta with a lot of bread and hummus.
Giselle: ¿Cómo comían parte del "mese"?

Mariana: Era el mese primero con el “keppe” crudo. I prefer “the mezze” de la comida libanesa, el yogurt, I like a lot falafel
Giselle: Me too. Y si haces (palabra en inglés) es una verdura afuera es rosada adentro es blanco
Mariana: Rabanitos
Giselle ¿Haces esto?
Mariana: Ah, pickle, se come mucho. ¿Ustedes lo comían?
Mariana: En mi casa no, pero sé que se come mucho también
Giselle: Nosotros siempre lo tenemos con el “mese”, mi mama compra un frasco. Siempre los rabanitos con un pedazo de remolacha tiene un sabor muy rico con el laban
Mariana Eso de la cebolla es muy fácil lo voy a hacer.
Giselle: Vinagre, azúcar.
Mariana: y las semillitas de la mostaza, pero eso para un asado es riquísimo.
Giselle: Tengo un libro fue difícil para conseguirlo porque no está publicado en los Estados unidos lo compre en Londres hay un autor, ese libro es gigante y todas cosa en frascos una cosa que quiero aprender es berenjena en aceite con un poquito de queso y nuez, riquísimo, eso lo probé en Líbano compre un frasco de berenjenas, queso, nuez aceite y algunas especias
Mariana: Lo voy a buscar
Giselle: Ese libro es muy lindo es una cosa muy tradicional del Líbano, estoy aprendiendo.
Mariana: Igual yo no lo guardo rápido, primero dejo que los sabores se asienten y después lo vuelvo a probar y si me gusta lo pongo en los potecitos. Hace todas las fotos que quieras
Giselle: Voy a sacarte una foto afuera.

Mariana [ENGLISH]

Giselle: How did you learn to make hummus?
Mariana: Well, in my family it was [commonplace].
Giselle: Was it just your grandfather that is Lebanese?
Mariana: It was done in my house it was made but I never registered it as something special, mayonnaise is exotic for me, in my house [hummus] is like cream cheese, it's [a] daily [thing] and my grandmother made it all the time – I’m telling you - every single day. We went to school in the morning and in the afternoon, and at midday we'd go have lunch at my grandmother's house, every day, because she lived a block over from the school and we would get to her house and there would be these stuffed grapeleaves. Our friends didn't like them or un understand them, they were hoping for chicken [fingers], food more for kids. Later, as we grew up, we started to realize that it wasn't normal in all houses and I realized that with the food that my grandfather liked - my grandmother is of italian origin, nada que ver - but she learned to make this food to entertain/please my grandfather because he liked it, but it's food that my grandmother learned to make from her sister-in-law, from her mother-in-law, [food] that she had no experiemce with because she was Argentine, her parents were Argentine, her grandparents Italian, but my grandmother learned to entertain her husband, because it was the food he liked to eat. My grandfather had a fabric business and when he came home at midday to eat and my grandmother had made this, his face would light up. He arrived and there was Arabic food and my grandfather would smile at the scene. As I began to grow, I began to take note of the recipes and the way of cooking. Over there is a mortar for raw kibbi and in the house we had one that came from Lebanon but it was impossible to move and when they tried to move it, it broke, so it stayed at the house and was lost.

Giselle: My mom's family ate it like that but it's very difficult to find it in restaurants.
Mariana: I only eat [raw kibbi] when when my grandmother made it, when I make it or at Sarkis. Have you been to Sarkis? It's a very well-known Armenian restaurant in Palermo and they make it very well there.
Giselle: And there is a long wait, many people have told me.
Mariana: Yes, it's difficult. Sometimes you have to wait two hours.
Giselle: But they make raw kibbi?
Mariana: Yes, they do it spectacularly and my grandmother did it with the stone. My grandmother often used canned garbanzos to make it quickly, but it's not the same. Afterwards, when I got into gastronomy, I began to research and know and learn and found out that canned garbanzo is a totally different thing than fresh garbanzo. I read a lot about hummus. I have a ton of Jewish friends with grandmothers and mothers that cook and I took many things from them, reading, trying on the internet. There are people that put cumin and I don't like it, it's very strong.
Giselle: A lot of people don't like cumin.
Mariana: It's because it really takes over. In the process of creating my own recipe... there's [some] with olive oil and some without, I like the taste of garbanzo with the tahini - the sesame paste is called tahini. It's from Lebanon and it's [also] difficult to get garbanzos now, they are costing me a lot. Have you been to the restaurant Dabbang?
Giselle: I went two nights ago!
Mariana: It's incredible, I think it's my favorite restaurant in the world. I've got good vibes with Mariano, the owner, he shares a lot of contacts with me and just today he shared the contact of a rural producer of garbanzos, thing is it's very expensive to bring them from the interior. To be able to bring me un camión I have to buy 500 kilos - first, that's 25,000 pesos, then I go looking for small producers... until I can buy this large quantity. Aside from that, if you keep it in bags or warm places there's liBle bugs. For this reason, I prefer to buy less quantity more regularly but then everything I use is from here; This olive oil I just bought because I ran out, but otherwise I use one that my cousin makes in the country, the pepper is similarly from Catamarca. I sell it without anything so people can add olive oil if they want it or not. You live in the United States, you see that there hummus is well known, I don't know about where you live but there's Whole Foods - there's a lot of hummus in those places.
Giselle: Yes, it's well known but it's kind of a different thing...
Mariana It's a sort of snack, I follow these brands but, you see, they're a whole different thing - *nada que ver*.
Giselle: But they're not very good.
Mariana: They put a ton of stuff in there... There are a lot of brands - that doesn't exist in supermarkets here.
Giselle: Is that why you started [making and selling hummus]?
Mariana: More than anything, everyone who tries, it likes it. Because I've been cooking Arabic food for a lifetime, I had an Arab restaurant here that I sold to Syrians, if you want, we can pass by - I don't know if it's helpful for you to take pictures there.
Mariana: Right, I don't like it.
Giselle: There are a ton of Syrian restaurants here...
Mariana: They are more.. not fast food but more casual, lower quality, cheap, shwarma, kebab - the quality isn't very good... Everyone liked the hummus I made, I liked it too and I started to sell it and my objective is to sell it, not super widely, but to be able to take it to small markets so the [customers] know more because it's really delicious, of high quality - the

idea is to be able to maintain that high quality and to be able to make it in quantity but growing and maintaining quality are not always compatible. If you make quality [goods], I don't know if you can do it on such a large scale.
Giselle: I agree, in this case it's a thing of value for a good price. Do individuals or businesses buy your hummus?
Mariana: Yes, because we don't put any additives or preservatives. It's very delicious and healthy but I still can't sell it - check. I didn't want the aesthetic of the branding to be [too] arabic. Did you no&ce that the logo has the cedar fruit? It's a tree my grandmother really liked. The fruit is called [pinecone] here. I wanted it to be more personal. After someone asks me, I tell them my background (the history of my roots). I wanted the name to be mine, I waited a long time, to dedicate decide on it.
Giselle: And how did you decide to start when you did?
Mariana: Out of necessity, I first worked one year in a restaurant. They terminated the contract, then she started kindergarten and I had more time at home.
Giselle: When did you start?
Mariana: Two weeks ago, I've had the brand for a while. I never had &me, it was never the right moment, plenty of excuses until I finally started.
Giselle And how's it going?!
Mariana: Very well! The one with eggplant, babagannoush - ¿it's so delicious, right? - I don't want to do it so yanqui, I want it to more traditional. I tried many Navors, but this is the most delicious. I'll have this one forever. I'll go ahead and vary it though, the pumpkin one is the most delicious.
Giselle: And to combine...
Mariana: And if I am going to add the babagannoush and if in restaurants we do - do you know Muhamarra?.. It's spectacular but since it has red peppers, it's dangerous because it ferments very fast.
Giselle: I bought it at Medio Oriente
Mariana And was it acidic?
Giselle: Yes, very, I noticed that the top was a little inflated, this happened to me in the restaurant. It was the one people loved the most (there weren't many in the case), people love it.
Mariana: Yes, because many people tell you that they know, but because I travel, it's another thing. It's not always made with tahini, here many people make it with peanut butter.
Giselle: I read that in an article!
Mariana: The hummus they make at Sarkis is tasty but they use peanut butter.
Giselle: Becuase tahini is expensive..
Mariana: But it's a [value-added] product. I sell it for 90 pesos, around -ve dollars. Is that expensive?
Giselle: No, it's a good price, I believe, for a well-made product.
Mariana: My idea is that they eat it like this. What was on the plate is the por&on that I sell and it's not a lot. But chaQng with a friend you eat all of it. It lasts a week in the freezer.
Giselle: People buy more than one?
Mariana: Yes, what I have to do is designate a day of shopping, a day of cooking, a day of

delivery. It makes me crazy because - think about it - that I do the shopping, the cooking, the distribution, I respond on Instagram, but OK I answer on Instagram but, well, I just started, right now I have to do everything myself, now it's like that, but it's going well, people really like it, luckily.
Giselle: Will you have regular clients?
Mariana: I already have them, I already had them from them from the restaurant where I first started cooking, in the first place I worked as a cook here - I don't know if you've been to the Syrian-Lebanese club?
Giselle: No, I need to go.
Mariana: It's lovely, the one that is in Recoleta, in Pacheco de Melo.
Giselle: I wrote them a few times.
Mariana: They didn't answer you?
Giselle: No, but that's OK, I can still go eat!
Mariana: To eat - it would be great if you could meet the owner - I'll show you his book - this is the owner, now he is much older. I worked there for six months.
Giselle: And the food?
Mariana: Iba mucha gente de la colectividad Sirio Libanesa. A lot of people from the Syrian-Lebanese community went, very many, and my grandmother went, they ate well, the kitchen is horrible but they don't see that.
Giselle: Is it different now? Someone told me they were renovating it.
Mariana: Because there are many more regulations.
Giselle: Oh, really? Can you make food at home to sell?
Mariana: I do it.
Giselle: That's not legal in the US. I want to do that!
Mariana: It's also illegal here, I do it but it's technically illegal. I don't have permission, my house is not properly set up.
Giselle: I was doing dinners at home.
Mariana: I love that, I'd like to do that here.
Giselle: It's a website called Eatwith - throughout the whole world - you'll have to look at it.
Mariana: I am going to look for it.
Giselle: It's everywhere, for example in Paris. Many countries use it and I started to do meals at my home, several people in my backyard, Lebanese dinner because we don't have Middle Eastern food in my town. I live in a small town near Portland, Oregon.
Mariana: What's it called?
Giselle: Hood River, it'd an hour from Portland in the state of Oregon, just north of California.
Mariana: Is it close to Vancouver, Canada?
Giselle: Yes, we have California, then Oregon, then Washington, then Canada. [Washington] isn't very big [so Canada is close].
Mariana: Because a friend of mine that lives in Vancouver did a road trip and told me that she went to Portland. She has a lot of photos - she's a photographer and she went to Portland - I remember it being very preBy and I want to go!
Giselle:We drove to Vancouver [once].
Mariana: How nice!
Giselle: And the food was great because they have everything, like Los Angeles.

Mariana: And is there Lebanese or Arabic food where you live?
Giselle: No, we're [only] about 10,000 people and have [just] seven or eight good restaurants.
Mariana: Is it a town with a lot of farms?
Giselle: Yes, we have a lot of agriculture, a lot of wine...
Mariana: Delicious!
Giselle: It's a land of vineyards and a lot of beer [as well] so close to Portland, so people are always asking [to visit].
Mariana: Here there is soemthing very similar called Cook Up.
Giselle: People can organize [meals] in their homes?
Mariana: You invite them to your home.
Giselle: It's wonderful when you're traveling, like myself, it's so nice to have dinner in a home, in someone's house. My dinners was more people from my town, some that I knew more or less, people that want Lebanese food, they want something different than the 7 restaurants where we always eat. it was fantastic.
Mariana: And you have the products [to make the meals]?
Giselle: Yes, we have Arabic markets in Portland.
Mariana: How far are you [from there]?
Giselle: One hour driving, I have a lot of friends there... Anyway, one day I got a letter from the local health department telling me I couldn't do them.]
Mariana: How did they find out?
Giselle: They told me that it was a public event, not a private event, since I was promo&ng them to the general public. There are ways to do it, though, so I am thinking of how I can continue with them.
Mariana: In a more private way?
Giselle: I think that if I send emails to my friends and offer a private Lebanese dinner for eight people - that person and their friends.
Mariana: If you don't tell them, so they don't resend that letter. Oregon [sounds] so nice! We're going to come to the West Coast and we can cook...
Giselle: And now you hafve a friend there! So do you cook other Lebanese food?
Mariana: I cook a ton of shawarma and falafel for catering. I also go to houses, they call me when someone is celebrating something, I have a machine [for shawarma] - I don't have it here but I can show you photos, and I do events. Aside from that, everyone asks me for hors d'ouevres - mezze - and I go and prepare the whole table, tabbouleh, Belén salad with eggplants, bell peppers, cashew nuts...
Giselle: I don't know this [dish].
Mariana: It's there in that book, bell peppers in the oven with lots of oil, sugar and ground chili. When it comes out, you mix it with cashew, raisins, and mint leaves.
Giselle: What do you call it?
Mariana: Belén Salad
Giselle: When you were describing your childhood, you talked about foods that were not at your friends' houses - I always took labneh to school and [other kids] would say, "What is that? Cream cheese?"
Mariana: Just as it is!
Giselle: And za'atar - at the end of the day [I'd eat] mana'eesh with za'atar.
Mariana: We don't have that here. I've never come across it.

Giselle: I saw it at Damasco [Market] - on Scalabrini Ortiz. I also met an 86-year-old woman at the San Marón church and she invited me to her house, she always buys ingredients at Damasco.
Mariana: Later I will send you the recipe, it's so delicious.
Giselle: The farmers [in my area] have a ton of eggplant and bell pepper in the summer.
Mariana: Now, I'm trying to buy organic from smaller producers. It's more expensive and more difficult [since] they bring it to you, you've seen that everything depends on time. In catering shawarma or kebab, I serve it with a yogurt sauce and sometimes I go to the event and people ask me for mayonnaise. "Do you have mayonnaise?" or "Put the mayonniase on there," and I say to them, "This isn't mayonniase!" "What is it?" "It's yogurt," I tell them. There's people that [associate] yogurt [only] with vanilla and strawberry for breakfast. Hay gente que piensa yogurt igual a breakfast vainilla o fru&lla. I make it with natural (unflavored) yogurt and I put garlic, olive [oil], cucumber and tahini for the shawarma, which I like, but people don't know about these things and can't [disassociate] from the structure of yogurt as a breakfast [food]. What I love to cook the most is what I most love to eat, I don't get tired of eathing this, I've eaten hummus everyday for the past two weeks. Today we went to the quinta that I told you about so you could come. And my in-laws are very Italian - my mother-in-law is a real personality - and today there were some tomatoes that she grew in the summer, that she puts up for the year, stew, pasta, olives, and we brought this [hummus]. It fascinates them and you mix it and it goes with everything! Now I take it everywhere I go. Did you already know Ali of Pick Up The Fork or did you meet her here?How did you meet her?
Giselle: I was looking for Lebanese food in Buenos Aires.
Mariana: I don't know her but I know her blog and I wrote to her, and she got back to me the day before yesterday. She told me that she'll take [some hummus] and that she's going to try it. She has a big following.
Giselle: She's very nice. I believe she was traveling and she stayed here because she fell in love with the the place. She told me she was studying [here] and she went back to Chicago, then returned to BA one day and stayed.
Mariana: I think she's from Israel.
Giselle: He family is, yes, but she's from Chicago. She has a sister that lives in Israel, she's good company. You guys will get along!
Mariana: And what do you do [at home]? How do you make a living? Do you cook? Are you a freelancer?
Giselle: Yes, I'm a freelancer but the truth is I am tired, on a day like today I do three jobs and it's tiring. I am trying to do just one or two things [now]. I do design, video, photography, and a little web design. I needed websites for my won business and I learned [how to make them] on the internet. After that, people in my town asked me to do them for their businesses. I'm also a dance teacher.
Mariana: Cool! What kind of dance?
Giselle: Jazz, hip hop contemporary
Mariana: There's a lot [of that] here. Have you seen any?
Giselle: Yes, but six weeks is not much time. I'd hoped to have time [to do stuff like that] but, in the end, it just wasn't enough time.
Mariana: It's a month and a half but in reality, [your work] is more gastronomy. You are doing a masters of gastronomy - is it more theoretical or culinary?
Giselle: Theoretical - history and culture. My thesis will be about forty pages on this

theme of Lebanese food. I met a guy who runs an organiation called CELIBAL - he's very nice and very Lebanese, he's from Córdoba but both of his parents are from Lebanon so he's 100% Lebanese.
Mariana: Were you with him?
Giselle: I went to the once to see if I could talk to him a bit and he is very friendly. I met his wife as well, who is also Lebanese, and he's helping me distribute a questionnaire [on this topic], that I will pass to you as well. It's a questionnaire that we are going to pass on to many people in the South American continent, not just Argentineans. He has contacts all over Laton America. I want to do this thesis, and the thesis will have some (talking about the cookbook - no se entiende la palabra en minuto 47:17 aproximadamente) you, his wife, Sergio. I was thinking I woud put my story as well...
Mariana: You have to meet Tito Abdala, tomorrow I am going to write to him to see if he'll be in the restaurant, don't go for dinner, just go around at about 6pm and ask if he's there. Do you know where it is? It's in the Syrian-Lebanese Club, but the one in Recoleta at Pacheco de Melo near de las Heras. Where are you staying?
Giselle: Just next to the park, next to the cemetary.
Mariana: Ah! You are like -ve blocks away! It's the headquarters of the Syrian-Lebanese club. They have the restaurant, which looks like the movie Aladdin - everything super Arab, but it would be great if you could speak with Tito Abdala, he's very nice and one of the -rst people in the community here that cooks Lebanese food in keeping with family traditions.
Giselle: There's not a lot...
Mariana: It's because you really have to look. Much is lost now because we are all grandchildren and great-grandchildren [of the original immigrants] and if [the recipes/food] weren't passed on, it's lost. In my family, my uncle also cooks Arabic food but I'm the only one that keeps the Navor alive because I saw my gandmother [cook] and I grew up with her.
Giselle: This seems so interesting to me - I am carrying on the [culinary] traditions [of my mother's family] but I am not doing that with my father's food.
Mariana: What is he?
Giselle: Muy father is American, he's from the US. There's not a strong culinary cultre with my dad, he's from the US and makes California food, fish, BBQ, but I'm much more interested in and feel like I am Lebanese.
Mariana: Me too. My siblings are crazy for the food but they're not so interested in getting involved in some place, in our family roots. On my father's side, they're Spanish, in Argentina, the majority of people are Spanish, Italian, Jewish, Arab, Syrian-Lebanese, but the majority are Spanish and Italian. It doesn't interest me much to look into my Spanish side or Italian. What interests me is the Lebanese [side].
Giselle: Why?
Mariana: I think it's because of the food, the connectedness between the food and the table. My family on my mother's side there are many symbols and things with which I iden&fy - a big table where there is always space for one more is very Arabic, very Armenian, very Lebanese. I have many Armenian friends and I worked with an Armenian woman in a restaurant - the one where I do freelance work. In my house, we always lived with our grandparents and the presence of my gransfather was very strong. And there was always room for one more at the table. And in my family, everythning happens at the table, you start having lunch and you end up having dinner without even noticing, and you were there at the table all day but not because you were eating, it's [simply] the language with which you relate [to others] (es el lenguaje que te

relacionas). It's not very easy to explain, it's like a meal that is meant for sharing. (Todas las colectividades) Everything is collective... because I go to [the home] of my partner and his grandparents are Italian - it's spectacular - some day you will know them, they have hens, eggs... For me, the unique thing about Arabs is the generosity, there is always a place for one more. I identify with [that] Arab culture. Today, there are many bad things in the world, in current history, but I don't believe that hoy tiene cosas muy malas en el mundo, en la historia actual, but I don't think I lived in a macho house. On the contrary, my grandmother did it out of love, she wanted to learn [how to make] the food that her husband liked. She did not do it becuase my grandfather obliged her to or for much less, simply for love, to please the person that she loved and she did it for him. I'll do it for you, now that I know you, for my friends and I wouldn't want it any other way. It could be like you said, that something happens with Lebanese culture. One of [my husband's] best friends is from a Syrian family, (si bien hay muchas cosas). In fact, the family of his friend knows my grandfather because my grandfather's textile company was well known, but people remember my grandfather because he was a very generous guy, he was a guy who helped people a lot. He is from a town in Buenos Aires called (llama Rauch). It's a very poor town and he came to Buenos Aires and started to bring his siblings, there were 11 [of them] and he helped them a lot. With the (del pulga) family, who are Syrian, there are many things that aren't at all parallel. The father is very machismo, the role of the woman, the sisters, the friend is totally crazy, they say actually crazy... He works in the Syrian-Lebanese club, the one in Saavedra, and for me can't be compared with [the reality of] life in my family. I swear to you, that don't have [this kind of,] such a gastronomic culture, at the table, it's different. When I traveled to New York, I contacted my -rst cousins that had the same surname as my grandfather and I met them there. I had already seen them here once, they came for their honeymoon, and I was very fond of them and I feel like I love them a ton. I wrote to Bernard Asmar, who I saw very little (something missing here?), but there is something that connects me, unites me and my uncle. The same thing happens every time he travels, he tries to see it but I believe that, in my case, it has a lot to do with food. It fascinates me, this food - eating it, cooking it, I love making it for others, seeing the table, the small plates, inviting people. It seems like it's very laborious, so much work, but in doing it for others... it's very difficult to explain.

Giselle: I completely understand you.
Mariana: It's like a meal that is always reaching out for someone more to come. On my part, I love it, and I also have so much respect for the recipes. I am a cook and maybe you like to play, invent, but not this that I do - I read, I researched, it's not the same to me when it's made with peanut buBer instead of sesame. In some way, I feel like I am honoring my grandfather in this, I am sure that he would love my raw kibbi, that he wouldn love that I have a mortar here. For many years I cooked things, not that I didn't like them, but more for the money or for work. But this - I love what I do and it's easy for me. But because I enjoy it a lot, it's a project that occured to me when I went to New York. I saw hummus everywhere, like in Whole Foods, and people eat it with chips, carrots, bread, in a sandwich and I thought, "How is it that people in BA don't know [hummus]? Why is it only my family that knows it? And why does it have to be so exotic?" If you have garbanzos, oil, lemon, garlic... if you don't want, you don't have to put enything else. And it was there that I thought of this project, the idea that gave Night to this project, and when Jacinta was born, I started it because I wanted more, from one day to the next, and out of necessity because my contract with the restuarant had ended. I finally said, "It's time."

And people love it. I am going to keep improving, keep growing. Do you want to go make hummus? We can keep changing and i'm here for whatever you need!
Giselle: Yes, I'd be very glad to help.
Mariana: For sure, you can help me with the garlic right now. Do you like a lot of garlic or a little?
Giselle: A lot...
Mariana: Here, only one - of all the sales I've made - told me [to make it] with a lot of garlic. You all have ("za'atar"), it's the best but it doesn't get imported here [much]. One time I brought it from outside of Argentina.
Giselle: We have a brand with a little fat guy and [the label] is orange and brown, but it's too hard, so it's also [dfficult] when people try making hummus for the first time.
Mariana: I leave it soaking all night, and I make it the next day.
Giselle: Do you cook Lebanese food for special occasions?
Mariana:If I have time and mixed with other things.
Giselle: Like what?
Mariana: I mix recipes, sometimes I make an asado and serve it with Belén Salad, like I told you, and it's good because they're eggplants and bell peppers, products that are very well-liked here, it keeps like that all night with baking soda.
Giselle: You speak good English...
Mariana: We'll talk...
Giselle: It's better than my Spanish
Mariana: No, I swear it's not, your Spanish is perfect.
Giselle: I can communicate, that's what's important.
Mariana: That's the most important, totally.
Giselle: What is a quinta?
Mariana: A big house where you are the owner, it's fantas&c because it's different than [daily] life at home, it's to go to on the weekends.
Giselle: Do you already have all the orders?
Mariana: Yes, I make it, I sell it. The first secret is that the garbanzos still be warm when you process them, if I leave them to cool, they'll get hard and I won't get the creaminess that I want. The first thing we do is process only [the garbanzos] until you have a puree and then I start to mix by eye ('yo lo hago al ojo' - no recipe).
Giselle: Where do you buy the tahini?
Mariana: I knew I met him when I worked [at the restaurant], he's the guy that brings these products to everyone who's making Arabic food. Let's add the garlic and then we'll try it. We are going to put garlic and then we are going to try [it], [then add] lemon juice and salt - this is how it is actually done so that the salt is well mixed.
Giselle: With half the lemon
Mariana: I put one and a half but it has to be kept cold for a day [prior]. I don't know why but one day someone told me that and I like how it turned out.
Giselle: Can I take some photos?
Mariana: For sure, whatever you like!
Giselle: My dream is to make a cookbook that contains people like you. One, two, three recipes of Mariana and after, 5 or 6 people from Argentina, four or five from Uruguay... but all Lebanese, to see what Lebanese food is like throughout [this part of] the world, because I agree that we need to maintain the tradition, and across generations and places.

Mariana: In Israel they eat hummus but it's very distinct, it varies according to the family, according to everything. For me, it's very important that it be known, because it's the somthing of great value and it can't be lost. Pass me the oil, the sunglower [oil] - a little - and by eye. You see how it's starting to get hard? It's lacking water, let's put in more water. Check it out, try it, you'll see.
Giselle: It looks like ice cream.
Mariana: You feel the lemon, I believe we put cold water because the machine imparts a lot of heat and it changes the Navor a little, because we used to do it by hand with a mortar and it seems [like that's why] we put that the cold water. Because I've also read that there are a lot of recipes - mostly in Arab countries where there make [large] amounts of hummus - they put little ice cubes. I think it's because of that. Now I'll mix it.
Giselle: One thing that's also difficult for me, I have talked with alot of Argentines and when I say what I am doing here around Lebanese food, they say "Great! There's lots of Syrian restaurants!"
Mariana: It's not the same, I love Armenian food but it's a different thing. The Armenian [food] at Sarkis is similar to the Arabic food that we ate in my house. They are very friendly Navors for people who are not Arab para la gente que no es árabe I ate it all the time.
Giselle: I am going to change my [hummus] method because I always just out everything in together.
Mariana: I used to put everything in together, my grandmother did it that way. Maybe [I do this] because the machines aren't so strong and I just don't want to break it. And now we're going to process it again. Let's try it and see if it needs more salt... it lacks lemon... it lacks garlic... and salt! I'm tes&ng it [as I go], this is why I don't measure it, because it's not always the same.
Giselle: I think that's something we learn at home with our mothers. My grandmother, my aount, my mom - my grandmother has passed away - they're always trying it the whole &me. When I am not cooking Lebanese food, when I'm cooking something else, I forgot [to try it]. But with Lebanese food, it's a habit. We make a lot of that food on holidays, on Christmas we eat niños envueltos.
Mariana: Vine leaves or cabbage leaves?
Giselle: Grape [leaves]
Mariana: We call them 'leaves of vine' here (hoja de parra).
Giselle: And the other one?
Mariana: Cabbage, that’s my favorite
Giselle: I need to try that.
Mariana: Pulga’s family, his aunt, is from the south of Italy, from Calabria.
Giselle: It seems like there are a lot of similari&es between Argen&ne, Arab, and Italian.
Mariana: And Spanish also. The Arab world in the Mediterranean, Greece, the produce is very similar - eggplants, olives, tomatoes, cucumbers.
Giselle: We make moulokiyeh, it's an Egyp&an dish, it's like a soup. The plant is jute, you have chicken, arabic bread, and rice. Some cripsy Arabic bread, and you do what you want [on your plate]. At our table, it's like a game to see how one sets it up, my grandfather always did it exactly the same. I cut the onion, the chicken. The soup has a strange taste.
Mariana: A lot of spices?
Giselle: It’s a plant that I've never eaten in anything else. It's used to make rope, it's green.

Mariana: Here they use yute for the “Alpargatas." I learned a lot from books, reading, and trying. My grandmother made the niños envueltos in zucchini with tabbouleh, beef and rice, babaganush, hummus, Belén salad. But my grandmother's star [dish] was kibbi.
Giselle: Always with beef or with lamb?
Mariana: No lamb.
Giselle: It's not common?
Mariana Here, no. Try it, it still lacks a little garlic and has a lot of tahini. Do you taste it?
Giselle: Yes
Mariana: Let's put more garlic.
Giselle: Did your grandmother put bell pepper [in the kibbi]?
Mariana: My grandmother put [bell pepper] in the cooked kibbi, in the raw kibbi only bulgur and onion. She [spent] the whole day cooking [it], with olive oil, she used to cut the onion very thin, up the olive oil, and mint leaves with a lot of bread and hummus.
Giselle: How did you eat it? As part of the mezze?
Mariana: It was the -rst mezze with the raw kibbi. I prefer “the mezze” of Lebanese food, the yogurt, I like falafel a lot.
Giselle: Me too. And do you make [radishes]... er... it's a vegetable that is pink on the outside and white on the inside?
Mariana: Rabanitos
Giselle Yes! Do you make those? The pickles? [they're eaten] a lot. Do you all eat it?
Mariana: Not in my house, but I know they're eaten a lot too.
Giselle: We always have them in the mezze. My mom buys a jar. [There]s] always radishes, with a piece of beet, it tastes super delicious with labneh.
Mariana These pickled onions are very easy.
Giselle: I'm going to make those. Vinagre, azúcar?
Mariana: and mustard seeds, but this on an asado is so delicious.
Giselle: I have a book - it was very di2cult to get it because it wasn't published in the United States, I bought it from London - there's an author, the book is huge, and all thing in jars. One thing I want to learn to make is eggplants in oil with a liBle bit of cheese and walnut. I tried it in Lebanon, I bought a jar of olives [stu*ed] with cheese, walnuts, olive oil, and some spices.
Mariana: I'm going to look for it.
Giselle: This book is beau&ful. [Mouneh] is a very tradiitonal thing in Lebanon, I'm learning.
Mariana: Sure. I don't put it in the fridge right away. First I leave it for the Navors to seBle and later I'll come back to try it and if I like it, I'll put it in the liBle containters (potecitos). Did you get all the photos that you wanted?
Giselle: I am going to take a photo of you outside.

Diego [SPANISH]

Diego: Chelvie, que es el nombre del restaurant, Lo elegimos porque era la Hermana mayor de mi abuelo, y como te comentaba siempre hay conflictos en el Líbano, ella tenía la vida bastante resuelta, se estaba por casar con un doctor todo muy tranquilo y mueren los padres. Entonces se hizo cargo de los ocho hermanos entre ellos mi abuelo. Se tuvieron que refugiar en un monte y bajaba a buscar comida para poder Alimentar a todos y no pudo terminar su vida como la tenía ella planeada y armada y gracias a ella sobrevivieron los ocho hermanos, que les daba de comer le dio educación etcétera. Creímos en un punto que había que hacerle a modo de homenaje familiar nuestro no es algo que este anunciado en ningún lado, te lo comento a vos porque me preguntaste específicamente por qué. La comida desde ya nos gusta desde siempre, porque nos criamos comiendo esa comida y nos pareció como un homenaje interno familiar ponerle el nombre de ella.
Giselle: ¿La receta es de tu mamá o de toda la familia?
Diego: Un poco de toda la familia mi mamá es de una forma mi abuela es de otra etcétera pero todos tienen un poco lo suyo todos cocinan y eso es bueno.
Giselle: Y Los hombres también
Diego: y los hombres
Giselle: ¿Sos de Buenos Aires?
Diego: Si, soy de Buenos Aires
Giselle: ¿Ves mucha gente Libanesa que come acá?
Diego: No mucha, pero si hay y también de otras regiones de medio Oriente y eso es interesante porque se encuentran bien, eso me da mucho gusto porque yo originalmente no soy de Medio Oriente soy de acá de Buenos Aires, entonces me da mucho placer cuando pasa eso porque quiere decir que estamos conectados de alguna manera. vino de la Alianza Francesa vinieron.
Giselle: ¿Y conocen la comida?
Diego: Conocen la comida muy bien y quieren hacer con nosotros un evento de la Alianza francesa, así que también me parece interesante sin que yo les describa nada ellos me decían todo lo que tenía y saben degustarla muy bien. Así que saben
Giselle: ¿Qué tipo de evento?
Diego: De todos los países que tuvieron relaciones de influencia en Francia
Giselle: ¿Un evento acá o en Francia?
Diego De la Alianza Francesa en Argentina
Giselle: ¿qué pensás de los restaurantes acá siempre comida árabe, sevillana, Armenia
Diego: Armenia por lo general siento más parentesco con la comida armenia
Giselle: Si, pero presenta como comida Árabe ¿no?
Diego: No, Líbano no está presente nunca, no sé por que
Giselle: ¿Y porque es importante para vos?
Diego: Por mi familia claramente.
Giselle: También es distinto el menú es distinto.
Diego: Si yo trato de no ser muy cerrado de no ser libanes sí que tenga la tendencia a traer a la comida del Líbano soy abierto a que tenemos muchas similitudes y que está bueno compartirlas
Giselle: ¿Te pone orgulloso presentar la comida?
Diego: Si, para mí la presentación es muy importante, de hecho me la paso todo el tiempo con la gente acá que la saca y por ahí creo que tienen que dedicarse más a la presentación, me parece importante le doy mucho hincapié. A veces me tildan de como de molesto. Si está bien queda lindo, pero no es así.

Giselle: ¿Por qué eligieron este lugar?
Diego: Por mi papa porque vivía acá al lado por defensa novecientos veinte y nueve., ahí había un conventillo, se le decía a un lugar que se comparte medio comunitario había un pasillo, varias habitaciones por un lado otros por otro un patio en común un baño en común y toda la parte izquierda era de mi familia por parte de mi padre y en frente había unos matrimonios de unos alemanes, habían diferentes hace mucho mis abuelos por parte de mi padre hace mucho mis abuelos que estaban desde antes que se hizo el mercado. Mi padre nació con el mercado ya hecho, pero era muy nuevo en ese momento. De hecho tengo entendido que para todos la cantidad de inmigrantes que hubo en esa época fue cambiando durante estos años yo lo vi todo a ese crecimiento desde chico porque vengo acá desde siempre, los fines de semana me quedaba a dormir en lo de mis abuelos, cuando era chiquito, conozco este lugar, jugaba a la pelota acá. A veces me rio un poco porque vienen y me dicen: "No esto cambio mucho "me cuentan. La gente se apropia mucho de este lugar por más que hayan vivido cinco, seis o diez años yo lo conozco desde siempre, a veces me da un poco de risa porque me comentan y se adueñan del lugar y me dicen: "No porque vos no sabes" y yo si se mi papa iba al colegio acá a una cuadra a la primaria tiene todos los mismos amigos desde chicos que vienen acá que los conozco de los locales que están acá, solo uno se conserva una persona originalmente que es el de la carnicería se llama José Sabarese el padre de él era el amigo de mi abuelo y vendía flores en la puerta del mercado hace muchos años imagínate él ya es grande y el empezó a trabajar acá y lo hizo entrar al hijo.
Giselle: ¿cocinan en Casa?
Diego: Parte cocina mi madre, parte nosotros, mi hermano y yo
Giselle: Aprendieron de tu mama
Diego: Si de mí mama mi abuela, mi abuelo todos
Giselle: ¿Cocinan juntos todos?
Diego: Si todos, una gran parte de la familia vive en el Uruguay viste que te dije que eran ocho hermanos, una gran parte vivía en Uruguay eran todos longevos murieron varios pero todos en una edad muy avanzada, la hermana de mi abuelo murió a los ciento siete años
Giselle ¿Todos están en América del sur o algunos están en el Líbano todavía?
Diego: Hay algunos, quedo relaciones del Líbano, venia mucha gente del Líbano a lo de mi abuelo si querés te muestro había un mural muy grande trajimos una parte que estaba en la casa de mi abuelo que es este una pintura si querés te lo muestro.

Diego [ENGLISH]

Diego: Chelvie, which is the name of the restaurant, we chose it because that was my grandmother's oldest sister, and as I told you, there's always conflicts in Lebanon. She had life quite figured out. She was set to marry a doctor, everything very calm, and [then] her parents died. So she became the person in charge of the eight siblings, among them my grandfather. They had to take refuge in a mountain and she came down to look for food to be able to nourish everyone, and she could not carry out her life as planned and ready. And thanks to her, the eight siblings survived, because she fed them, educated them, etc. We believed at a point that there had to be a way to make it a homage to our family. It's not something that's very pronounced anywhere [to our customers], I'm just telling you because you asked me specifically why we called it that. We have always loved the food, because we grew up eating that food and it seemed like an internal family homage to give it her name.

Giselle: The recipes are from your mom or all of your family?
Diego: A little bit of all the family. My mom in one sense, my grandmother in another, etc. But everyone has a their little. Everyone cooks and that's great.
Giselle: The men too?
Diego: and the men.
Giselle: Are you from Buenos Aires?
Diego: Yes, I'm from Buneis Aires.
Giselle: Do you see a lot of Lebanese people eating here?
Diego: Not a lot, but there are [some] and also [people] from other parts of the Middle Eastpero, and this is interesting because they find it good. This pleases me very much because I am not from the Middle East, I'm from here, from Buenos Aires, so it please me so much when this happens because… I want to say that we are all connected in some way. (*Vino de la Alianza Francesa vinieron*.)
Giselle: And they know the food?
Diego: They know the food very well and that want to do a French Alliance event with us, that also seems interesting. Without me describing anything, they told me everything I had and they know how to taste it very well. So they know.
Giselle: What type of event?
Diego: Of all the countries that had influential relationships with France.
Giselle: An event here or in France?
Diego: The French Alliance in Argentina.
Giselle: What do you think of restaurants here always being called Arabic food? Syrian, Armenian...
Diego: Armenia In general, I feel the most kinship (*parentesco*) with Armenian food.
Giselle: Yes, but it always presents as Arabic food [as well], no?
Diego: No, Lebanon isn't ever presented, I don't know why.
Giselle: And why is it important for you?
Diego: For my family, clearly.
Giselle: It's also unique, the menu is unique.
Diego: If I try not to be too closed off to not being Lebanese, since I'll have the tendency to bring the food of Lebanon, I am open to [the idea] that we have many similarities and it's good to share them.
Giselle: Does presenting you proud to offer this food?
Diego: Yes, for me presentation is very important, in fact I spend all my time here with the staff here that takes it out [to the tables]. I think that have to dedicate more [care] to presentation, it seems important to me. I give it a lot of emphasis. Sometimes they call me annoying. If it's good, then it stays nice, but it's not like that.
Giselle: Why did you choose this location?
Diego: Because of my dad, because he lived just by here, at Defensa 929. There was a little convent over there, they said it was sort of a communal place. There was a hallway, several rooms on one side, more on the other, a communal yard, and a shared bathroom. And the left side of the house was my family's, my father's side. And in front there was some weddings for German couples. My grandparents had been different for a long time – my grandparents on my father's side. My grandparents were there a long time, since before the market was created. My father was born with the market already made, but it was very new at the time. In fact, I've come to understand that it continued to change during those years as a result of the many immigrants

there were at the time. I saw all this growth since I was a boy because I've been coming here for forever, on the weekends I stayed the night at my grandparent's house, I knew this place when I was really small, I played with a ball right here. Sometimes I laugh a little because they come and say to me, this [place] has changed a lot they tell me. People have appropriated and changed this place a lot for longer than they have lived. 5, 6, or 10 years… I've known this place forever. Sometimes I laugh a little because they comment from a place of ownership and say, "No, because you don't know." And I do know. My dad went to high school on block from here, one block to the primary school. He has all the same friends from when they were boys here, they come here, I know [the guys] from the shops that [were] here. Only one original [shopowner] is still here, he's the man with the meat counter, his name is José Sabarese. His father was a friend of my grandfather's and he sold flowers in the market stall for many years. Imagine! Now he's old and he started working here and had his son take over.
Giselle: Do you all cook at home?
Diego: My mom cooks some, we cook some – my brother and I.
Giselle: Did you learn from your mother?
Diego: Yes, from my mom and my grandmother, my grandfather, everyone.
Giselle: Do you all cook together?
Diego: Yes, all of us. A big part of the family lives in Uruguay. Remember how I told you there were 8 siblings? A big part lived in Uruguay. They were all long-lived, several dies but at a very old age. My grandfather's sister died at 107.
Giselle Everyone is in South America or some are still in Lebanon?
Diego: There's some, I keep connections with Lebanon, many people have come from Lebanon on my grandfather's side. If you like, I'll show you? There was a very big mural that we brought over – a part that was in my grandfather's house, this painting. If you want, I'll show you…

Sergio and Marianela

S = Sergio
G = Giselle
M = Marianela

S: In general, we don't because the baklava is very difficult.
G: (talking about Gannon, Andrea, and niece/nephew)
S: In your brother's house, do they eat a lot of Lebanese, do they have…
G: Yes, she cooks Lebanese food.
M: But she is from Lebanon or she was born…?
G: Her grandparents are, so her father is Lebanese, born in the states, and I believe it's her grandparents.
M: And her mother is Lebanese?
G: Her mother is Irish. But her grandmother taught her mother to cook Lebanese, and one of the things she taught her that she does very, very well is baklava.
M: Wow.
S: It's not easy, huh?
G: My sister-in-law also makes it, it's delicious. But her mom – it's so, so good. But it's so interesting because her mom was taught by – no experience with this dessert whatsoever – along comes her *suegra*…
S: You know, it's not unusual that the *suegra* would teach a non-Lebanese wife the recipes. It's like, you know, you conquer the husband from the stomach. It works for Lebanese, believe me. When I was dating Marianela, so we met in Uruguay…
M: At the Lebanese embassy.
S: At the Lebanese embassy. You know, it was funny, I'll tell you the story of how we met. We were organizing the youth – an international conference for the Lebanese youth. This is back in 1985. And I was responsible for organizing this first event and we decided to organize in Uruguay. I had to travel to Uruguay to meet the youth and to see how we were going to organize this big event with 1,000 people coming from all over the world. Young people. You know, it was a big thing. And I was 23 years old. So I go to Montevideo and I arrive to the airport and the consul of Lebanon was driving and the first question he asked me is, "Do you have a girlfriend?" I said, "No, I don't. Because I didn't at that time." He said, "I have somebody for you here." First dialogue, coming from the airport! So, we arrive to the embassy and a bunch of young people come out of the embassy on the stairs, and I saw Marianela and I told the consul, "I hope this is the one." And I didn't know if this is the one he has in mind at all but he says, "Yes! This is the one. This is the one for you. Hallas!," he said, "That's it."
G: That's amazing.
S: And then he organized a lunch, invite your friend to the lunch, and from that moment on, it's history. Then I went to meet her father…
M: 1985
G: 1985. That's the year I was born.
S: Exactly.
M: Wow.
S: So, then, a few months later, I went to visit her. I wanted to meet her parents.

G: So you remained in…
M: in Uruguay.
S: And I was living in Córdoba. And so I took the bus – an 18 hour bus –
G: Because you were 23…
S: Exactly. And I was a student. So I went to… And then we drive from Montevideo to town and the mother – the whole weekend I spent the weekend in the house, cooking Lebanese food at home. And it was like *everything*. She cooking, I don't know, for two weeks. Because I was coming. She wanted to make sure that she made a good impression.
G: Yes, for the suitor.
S: I always – now, when I go to visit my mother-in-law, I say, "Now that you've married her, you never cook for me anymore!"
G: And what does she say?
S: Oh, she cooks because I tease her all the time so she, she cooks.
G: They still live in the same place? What part of Uruguay?
M: It's a little town in the middle of Uruguay, it's called Flores.
S: It's a small town, in the middle of the country. As you arrive to town, the first thing that shows up is Plaza Republica del Líbano.
M: No, but If you come from Salta.
S: Yes, well when I come from Córdoba and the first thing you see is Plaza del Líbano.
M: Yes, that's my father that… (built that)
G: Are your parents from Lebanon?
M: My father is from Lebanon. He was born in Lebanon. And he came to Uruguay when he was 20 years old. My mom is Lebanese origin. She is from another town and her parents are Lebanese, they came from Lebanon. So, it's like Sergio, it's the same thing.
S: So, my four grandparents were Lebanese, her four grandparents were Lebanese, and the two fathers – hers and mine - are Lebanese.
G: And your mother was born in Argentina.
S: OF Lebanese parents.
M: Like my mom.
S: So we have no, I don't have, I have no mix.
G: (talk of blonde children, dark hair, joke, Gavin's background, 00:08:16)
S: We did it (genetics test). My friends laugh at me. They say, "what did you do it for?"
G: Were the results what you expected?
S: Yes. I have, I'm like, 120% Lebanese.
M: So, I have kafta, the chicken (shishtaouk), kibbi, cooked, so you're going to try everything.
S: This is with lamb, we made. The kibbi and the kafta.
G: What did you call the chicken?
M: Shishtaouk… And then you have a salad, please help yourself. You want another plate for the salad?
G: No, it's fine!
M: You sure?
G: Yes. Thank You… I reached out to (@ Allie Lazar 00:10:25).
S: So, we typically eat the kafta with the hummus and I put labneh on the kibbi.
M: The chicken – we marinate it all night with garlic, olive oil, lemon, and sumac, and seven spices.

S: You know what (semet) is, right? The sumac.
M: Then you leave it in the refrigerator for the whole night, and then the next day we barbecue or you do it out of the kitchen.
G: The oven?
M: No, you can pan-fry it.
G: On the stove?
M: On the stove, yes.
S: It's not really fried, it's like grilled. Not cooked in oil
M: No, but if you have a barbecue, things come out much better.
G: There's a grocer that I go to in Portland to get Middle Eastern products, the owner is Lebanese. She's a chef too and her food is delicious. She makes the bestf falafel in all of Oregon, I'm sure of it.
S: You know, I can't get used to falafel. I don't like it.
G: You don't?
S: My father used to die for falafel.
G: Really? I like it. I only like it when it's... it's gotta be really good. Otherwise, I don't need it.
S: Everybody tells me, "Oh, falafel, falafel, you know?" Honestly, I never liked it. We went to Lebanon last summer and we went to a restaurant which is supposed to be like the best restaurant in Lebanon and I ate the falafel and it was good, but it's not, like, my favorite dish.
Did you like the falafel?
M: Mmm.
G: It's not my favorite either. Partially because it's so.... it's made to be so heavy, so much oil... She makes it with some sort of fresh green so when you break it open, it's bright green. It's got something in it - a fresh green instead of just a lot of dried goods. I like hers and it's really light. I think they just pan-fry it in a bit of oil instead of deep-frying it. And then the wrap with tahini is delicious... You can find falafel anywhere in the United States, in non-Middle-Eastern restaurants it's very common, it's everywhere - falafel. And that's sort of a funny thing. That's one of those things that people think is like, 'Middle Eastern' - well, it's falafel, so... sometimes I think people put things on menus to try to appear more worldly, for their menus to seem more worldly. But, you're making this sort of mediocre falafel... But she has a wrap and she calls it Lebanese garlic chicken and I think it's this, because it's clearly a garlic marinade. But she just calls it Lebanese garlic chicken. But I think it's interesting because everything in there is Lebanese - she's Lebanese and she's making Lebanese food but I think it's interesting that there's just *one* thing she's decided to put on the menu as 'Lebanese Garlic Chicken,' instead of just 'Garlic Chicken Wrap,' because everything is Lebanese! It's odd... It's delicious - I get it every time I go there.
M: So you have been to Lebanon?
G: I've been once. I went for the first time two and a half years ago, 2015. I hope to go back many times. I would love to live there for a year or two.
M: You went with your husband?
G: I went with my mom, just my mom and I. My friend was in Turkey at the time and met us for a short time. My mom hadn't been back in 41 years.
S: Wow.
G: So, since before I came into her world! (00:17:34 - I talk about family and trip, Gavin's interest in going v. my parents)
M: So you have to go with [your husband] now, next time.

G: (more talk about my family, going to Lebanon)
M: Now, the family that you have in Lebanon, they haven't been to the US?
G: The only family that I know in Lebanon, my mom calls him her cousin but it's her - I had to ask him, his name is Samir, I had to ask him how we are related - because, you know, everyone is your cousin. So I asked him, my mom calls his dad Uncle Samir, but I think his dad is my grandmother's cousin...
S: Ah, so it's not close at all.
G: So it's not my cousins, it's not her cousin, you know, it's the son of my grandmother's cousin. But he treats us very much like family and took care of us and took us around. But he's the only one I know. But that's why I'd like to go with my godfather, because he still has family. And they live outside of Beirut, they live in the moutains, so... and he's a good man, I'd love to travel wtih him.
S: We have so many friends in Lebanon.
G: My uncle has so many friends in Lebanon. My mom and my uncle, they do not, they don't really have a relationship.
S: Typical Lebanese family.
G: Yeah, you were saying something the other day about Lebanese being individualistic and then that creates issues with siblings.
S: The Lebanese don't get along [with each other]. You know, I have - when I went to Georgetown - I had to take anthropology, because it was a Catholic school and you had to take theology. And I had my professor, he didn't even know I was Lebanese. And he said, "There are two people in the world that are as unique as opposite," and he said, "and they are the Lebanese and the Japanese. And he said, "if you put a Lebanese, if you put a Japanese, alone by himself anywhere in the world, he probably will open a flower shop or he will probably become a sushi man or he'll probably become a dry cleaner, but he will be ok. If you put many Japanese together, they will create an empire. Now, if you put a lebanese alone anywhere in the world, he will create an empire. But if you put many Lebanese together, they will go nowhere.
G: That's so interesting! (laughs)
S: It's so true! It's so true!
G: Why do you think that is?
S: Because we are individualistic! You know, we, by ourselves can really become an empire and we are all emperors of our own empire, but we don't know how to work together. And this is not new! This is from the Phoenicians. You never heard the [phrase] 'The Phoenician Empire,' because we were not an empire. They were independent cities, each one hated the other, which were neighbors, they were all Phoenicians, spoke the same language, had the same blood. One was Sydon, the other was Beiritus, the other was Byblos, and they hated each other, they all traded and they don't talk to each other, they have the same language, but they were family! And they all created empires and they had colonies in Africa, in Europe, they created Marseilles, they created...
G: They each created their own empire?
S: They had their own little thing, this is so Lebanese!
G: That's so interesting that it carried through...
S: It's so Lebanese! You know? You have here, you found, you have a Lbeanese, and you go to their house and you are impressed with 'wow, they money they make...' but when you go together to work with the Lebanese? It's impossible. And I know the Lebanese, I've tried to work with them. You can't! You can't!

G: But do they work better with other people from other places?
S: Yes. They are probably humble when they are with other people. But when we are with the Lebanese, it is - who's the bigshot?
M: For example, the Lebanese, they mix here with other people. Not all the Lebanese marry the Lebanese.
S: No! Most they didn't.
M: You know, it's the Italians, the Spaniards, the Germans.
S: Of course, the Lebanese really mixed. It's not like the Jewish or the Armenians, you know? They stuck together, we didn't. We spread.
M: There is one thing that - in Mexico, it's different. The community there, you see, you've been to Mexico, you have a lot of Indians. So, that's why the Lebanese married another Lebanese, or an Italian...
(S interrupts to tell M about news of a friend's death, a friend from Mexico.)
S: We have a lot of friends in Mexico... (more talk)
M: I think we will have to go and see his wife.
S: We'll see his son there. Anyway... (more talk)
(S encourages us to 'try the red [wine]' I brought, have been drinking white wine, 'I like the color of this wine.')
M: ...because I cannot eat anymore.
S: No, I'm fine.
(G talking about wine, Diana, Malbec, wine preferences - Chilean, Spanish. ALL talking about Mendoza. Talking about going to Salta, the *empanadas Saltenas.* M talking about empanada places in Mendoza - one she didn't like, one she didn't.)
M: It's really a very nice town.
G: How will I know which are the empanadas I should try?
S: In Salta? I would try the any *empanadas* you offer me!
M: (hushed) Ah, it's so good!
It's completely different than Lebanese '*empanada,'* no?
S: Then you come here and you don't like [the] *empanadas* anymore.
G: I've had a few, I had one that I really liked, and the rest...
S: The best empandas in Buenos Aires are in a restaurant called *Estilo Campo*. In *Puerto Madera*. This is like Salta's *empanadas*. Everywhere else, I've never had a good *empanada*.
M: Maybe *Los Immortales?* It's OK.
S: Yes, bien. And it's *cortada a cuchillo*. Becuase you can have the minced meat.
M: Or if not, the one...
S: If not, the real empanada is cut with the knife, so the meat is cut with the knife. it's bigger chiunks and it;'s juicy because you don't lose all the juice from grinding the meat.
G: There's some good ones in *Cordoba*, that was my introduction to empanadas.
S: Where did you have good empanadas? I don't know, really.
G: Mostly in the home.
S: OK. She lived in the center?
G: Yeah, we were in Cordoba, in a neighborhood. You have to tell me the name of the restaurnat, because we'll go.
S: Al Malek. It's OK.
M: You want more *kibbi*?

S: I think I'm fine.
M: Yeah, you are fine? OK.
G: I eat very slowly.
M: Yeah!
S: This is the way you should. I eat very fast.
M: He eats very fast.
G: I used to eat too fast.
S: No, no, no, you should enjoy... you know she's gonna see Barbara Massaad? Akram is doing a seminar and Barbara is coming to that seminar. Remember Barbara?
M: Yes
S: We spent - last summer or two summers ago?
M: Three summers ago.
S: Three already?
M: Time flies!
S: We were in Portugal, a group of people, and Barbara was among the group.
M: Because we have these friends, mow they live in Lebanon. I mean, they are Lebanese, but they used to live in New York. You know, when there was a war - so everybody was working in New York. Once they were finsihed and Lebanon becamse much better than it used to be, so everybody came back to Lebanon, so that's why we have so many friends there! So, these friends, we met them in Portugal, but we didn't know Barbara, but she is friends of our friends. So, [hallas - (I think Arabic word for luck)] we were introduced to Barbara and her husband, and then another couple, I don't remember their...
S: (says the name 00:31:35)
M: Yeah, they live in Wisconsin, but they used to live in Lebanon, but our friends, you know, you get closer.
S: In Lebanon, you know everybody.
M: Yeah, and also, the thing is that the Lebanese live outside of Lebanon and then they go back to Lebanon, and I think they get used to the comminuty and the customs of the people there, it's like you get closer... (S interrupts - offers wine) for example, my friends that used to live in New York, they are Lebanese, and they went to Lebanon, and they say that the Lebanese that never left Lebanon, that have always lived in Lebanon, is completely different than the people that move abroad because of the war, then they go back to Lebanon, they think completely different. So...
S: I have many differences with the Lebanese from Lebanon.
M: Yes, that never left...
S: The Lebanese that left Lebanon, I consider them my peers. Doesn't matter where they went - if they went to the Us, to Australia, whatever. So I always distinguish between the Lebanese of Lebanon and the Lebanese from abroad. We are different. They say, 'Oh, we are all the same.' We are not.
G: It's a different lifestyle?
S: No, not only the lifestyle, we have, we are much more open-moinded, and we are... You know, in a way, we brought back the idea of being cosmopoloitan to the Lebanese, who've lost it a little bit, because of Syrianization and because of the Arabization.
M: Of the war and everything, people...
S: Yeah, and they became more parochial. We are much less parochial than they are.

M: But some of them didn't leave Lebanon during the war, some of them yes, and then, you know, they go back, they're completely different. I think they feel different, also, from the people that stayed the whole time in Lebanon.
G: I found, Samir, my cousin, he's 55 or so, he fought in the war, and I found - I'm a pretty liberal person - and I'm very vocal about what you're doing a talk on, that not all Muslims, they're not scary poeple. There's a group of people doing bad things and this does not define the group - that I feel very strongly about, especially at this moment in the United States, it feels ever more important to be vocal about that, that, no, that's not fair. So, when we went there, he kept saying 'don't go to the Muslim neighborhoods.' So I said, sure and went anyways! Because that's part of Beirut.
S: My cousins are the same.
M: Yeah! Your cousin...
S: I took him to [Saida (00:34:53)] and he said, 'are you crazy?' I said, 'No, you are coming.' He said, 'No, I'm not coming.' 'Then I'm [going] alone.' 'Are you crazy?" I said, 'No, you are crazy.'
M: Yeah, because they were afraid.
S: So I took him there and he was like, 'but, these are the...' and I said, 'What?? What did they do to you?' And they offered him sweets... I mean, of course there are bad Muslims but there are many bad Christians!
M: Yes! That's the thing!
S: Look at who we have in the White House, for Heaven's Sake... (laughs)
G: We won't call him a Christan.
S: Hitler said he was a Christian.
M: He's not Muslim, they say, whatever it is.
S: Did you see he fired Tillerson today? The Secretary of State, The only decent guy he had in the whole freaking... He fired him and putting the CIA director in charge of it. (talk about Trump, negative re: Republicans)
M: A little bit more salad?
G: Yes, thank you.
M: I have also kafta... (More Trump/Republican talk - 00:36:59)
S: Well, one of the things, if you go to Lebanon today, most Lebanese, especially Christians will say, 'We like Trump.' It's crazy.
G: Reallly, why??
S: Because they are idiots.
(G comments, surprise. Growing up in LA)
S: You know, we are New Yorkers, by all kinds of definitions. So, we are very liberal ourselves. I am Catholic, you know, but, in terms of ideology, I'm a liberal.
G: And at this point, I think, you know, everyone is entitled to their own lifestyle and opinion - liberal or not liberal - but, sometimes, in the US at this moment, it's not about even being liberal, it's just about being human about things. You can't discriminate against people, how many steps back will we take?
S: When I describe myself as liberal, I'm on the humanistic side, I'm not on the communist, leftist side.
G: Yeah, I can tell, you're open-minded. That's all it takes.
S: Exactly, I don't accept authoritarians of any kind of shape. I don't accept impositions. I don't accept raciosts. I don’t accept discrimnataions against race or gender or, you know, personal cjoices of whatever you are.

M: For example, I don't agree that the teachers should have guns...
S: You see this? He wants teachers to carry guns... the guy is freaking crazy.
M: No, no, no.
G: It's crazy.
M: So the kids, then, will have guns. Everybody is going to have a gun?
G: And I have friends who are teachers who say, 'No way.'
(More talk about teachers + guns 00:38:46. S & M anti-everyone-being-armed. 'Need to change this amendment.' 'Why do you pay taxes to the government so they can be armed so you don't have to be armed?' G: Dick's Sporting Good new policy. M sent home from jury duty because she said guns should be banned from US. Teachers and students with guns.)
M: (00:46:33) Have more! Kibbi? Sure? Please.
G: No, thank you, that was perfect.
M: Sure? You are at home and you can eat more! You want a little more salad?
G: No, that was perfect.
M: I'll have a little more salad. You want?
S: Salad, yes.
M: We have to finish the salad, I cannot, that's the thing I cannot [save].
G: The first time I met you, Sergio, what I loved that you said about the organization was presenting Lebanese people as multi-religious, multi-cultural...
S: That's what we are.
G: That's what we are.
S: If they tell you that Lebanese are Christians, this is a mistake. Lebanon was, you know, once... I come from 100% maronite family. But you know what I highlight about my Maronite background? The origin of my family comes from Lebanon. OK? So, we are near the [Mt. Charvil] area where [St. Charbil] lived and stuff like that. My last name is [Maklouf] not Jalil, so we are probably related to St. Charbil, somehow. But they went to the Chouf and they went to start the village, which was originally Druze region, so the origin of my family is an origin of coexistance. The Druze gave this land to the Maronites to come and colonize the Chouf. So my oqwn background comes out of an act of coexistence. How can I not be in favor of coexistance? If the Druze had not given this land to the Maronites, my family would have never been in that village. My village is in the middle of the Druze area and we are surrounded by Druze. And they gave us that land for the Maronites to be there. And my father married a Greek Orthodox, so my mother is from a different Christian sect. And their family lived surrounded by Muslims and they exchanged (mumbles 00:48:36). So my own background is coexistence. How can I not be in favor? I don't believe in a purely Christian Lebanon. I am as opposed to a purely Christian Lebanon as I am opposed to a purely Muslim Lebanon. I don't accept anything that I'm not willing to give. So, I think we should be... if we don't coexist, we are going to disappear as a country. If Lebanon is not what it is, it would disappear. And our whole culture, the whole success of Lebanon is [because] we were able to coexist. The minute we don't coexist anymore... that's why I think the wars in Lebanon, the Muslims and Christians, was imposed on Lebanon. I don't think it's natural. We have much more years of coexistance than years of fighting. And my theory is that every time you have somebody from the outside interfering, this is when we fought. And we look for friends outside Lebanon, each one. You know, the Christians went to France, went to America, went to Israel. And the Muslims went to Syria, to Egypt, to Iraq, or to Saudi Arabia. Or now to Iran. I mean, this is our problem.

I have a good friend of mine who is a Shiite from Paraguay. And I have another good friend of mine who is an Orthodox from New York. And I have another good friend of mine who is a Maronite from Colombia. We went to Lebanon - we were organizing this trip for about 350 young people, when I was yougner - we went to Lebanon to organize this trip. And we went to different places and we went to my village.
G: What is your village?
S: It's called (says the name 00:50:30), it's near another name). You know, up in the mountains, up in the Chouf. So, I have all these four friends from different communities. Of course, my town is 100% Maronite Catholic. And one of my friends, his name is Ahmad, he is Muslim from Paraguay. But in Paraguay, when you are a Muslim, they change their names not to become too Muslim because they are a little bit paranoid and they don't want to be seen as Muslims.
G: Is that problematic in Paraguay?
S: For Muslims? Yes. They change their names. And even here too. A real Muslim name they change to something else. We have a friend; his name is Jacinto. His real name is Assad. This guy Ahmad, his name is Armando. Jose, Jorge. So I was with this friend of mind, Ahmad. Shiite from South Lebanon. 100 % Shiite. Blue eyes. The only blue eyes in the group. He's whiter than me.
M: Yeah, really, he doesn't look Muslim.
S: So I go to my town. You know, and they receive me, and I bring, with Salim, the Orthodox, with Fernando, the Catholic-Christian, with Armando. And we dance the dubke, we spend the day there. Everybody, everybody in the town loves Armando. So, six months passed, I go back to Lebanon. And I went to visit my uncle and my family and they say, "How aere your friends? You didn't bring your friends." "No, each one is, you know, in their own place." "How is Armando??" I say, "Yes, Armando is in South Lebanon." "South Lebanon? There is only Muslims in South Lebanon. What is he doing there?" And I said, you know, Armando's name, really, is Ahmad." Of everybody, they loved Armando. "What do you mean he's Ahmad?" And I said, "Yes, he's Ahmad." "But you said his name was Armando." So I explained to them that in Latin America they change [their names]. "And you brought a Shiite to our house?" And I said, "You are full of shit." "You are full of shit," I told them. Of all my friends, you liked the Muslim, and now you don't like him anymore because he's Muslim?" "You're fucked up," I told them. "You are totally crazy."
M: So you see? If you like that person, if he's nice...
S: "Nooo, it's OK," they tried. "He's nice but you didn't tell us he's a Muslim." "Why should I tell you? This is his relationship with God. Do you people come and ask you, What are you?" "Oh, but everybody knows we are Maronites." "Who cares?" It's really crazy.
M: You have really bad Maronites.
S: Of course, you have bad Maronites. But the thing is, if you ask me, that sometimes I have more things in common with Ahmad than with my cousins, who are related to me by blood. Ahmad is a Lebanese immigrant in Paraguay and, you know, he drinks scotch, he doesn't care about, you know. He's a friend, and he lives like we do. There is no difference! Maybe he prays, I don't even know if he prays, I don't think so, but I don't care.
M: Well, when they are too religious, maybe we don't have anything in common.
S: Of course, because we are not too religious either.
M: No. But you have these Muslims or you have these other people, that they... but when, you know, you have Ahmad, he is like us. Maybe he prays, we don't know, whatever. But he's really

a nice person. I don't care if he's Muslim or... if he is a nice person. But in Lebanon, that thing is very important.
S: They are much more parochial than we are.
M: But, they are the people that stayed in Lebanon because the poeple that left Lebanon and went back, they don't care if he's Muslim or Orthodox or whatever.
S: The truth is, I do understand also, I do understand the threat, you know, I'm not naive. I know that Islam is growing. And eventually, Islam doesn't want to have all the Christians in Lebanon. I understand all that. But that doesn't make every Muslim a bad person.
G: Yeah, you can't be defined by...
S: Exactly. I know that Israel is terrible, but one of my best friends is an Israeli Jew. I don't like Israel. I don't.
M: And I don't like these Orthodox Jews...
S: Exactly, but one of my best friends is Israeli, and he's Jewish.
G: I had an interesting conversation (more: with one of my Israeli-Jewish friends, how do young people change this?)
S: It's like Ken with me. "You should be in Miami. Where are you?" He lives in Miami, so when we come, the first thing he comes to see us. He really enjoys going out with us. I am, like, one of his closest friends. And, you know, his parents...
M: You know, his closest friends - one is from Lebanon, the other from Germany.
S: So his parents freak out, "How can you have a friend from Germany and another friend from Lebanon?! You are crazy!" He says, "But I love these guys, what can I do?!" (laughs)
M: Yeah, but, you know, his parents, they are like a little bit, you know!...
S: His parents are very polite with us and they know that we went to Lebanon.
M: No, but, you know his parents left the concentration camps...
S: No, his grandparents.
M: His grandparents.
S: But the mother, you know, when he comes, she says, "So you went to Lebanon?" "Yes." "How was it?" "It was fantastic!" "Did you have fighting?" "No, we only have fighting when you guys invade us! Otherwise, we don't have fighting!"
M: But, also, if you go to Israel, you might see something there.
S: Of course! But they think that Lebanon is like the Wild West. And you go to Israel, and they think Israel is like (mumbles). (laughs)
G: When, in fact, it's the same likelihood of anything happening.
M: But, you know, we are planning now to go to Israel. Have you been to Israel?
G: No, it looks beautiful.
S: We are going in October. We're looking forward to it.
M: I want to go. It's something we've been postponing because, I don't know... Or because it wasn't the right time, because, you know, these wars and things and problems.
S: Giselle? More white or red?
M: And then because of the weather - it's very hot there, so if it was July, we say it's not the right time to go. Because we also we want to go to Jordan. Jordan, Israel, you know. So, now we are going in October.
S: And Palestine. We want to go to Palestine.
M: Yeah, as we are going in October. Everybody says you should go to Israel and Jordan in April or May and that's it, or you have to go in October, November, December. That's all. Never go in July, August. Or September. Becuase it's SO hot. So I said, OK. Now that we are going in

October to Lebanon in October, I told him, "If we can, it's the right time to go." And we have been postponing this, so I said I think it's time to go to Israel. So we are going to ask our friend, like, where to go... the thing that I don't like is this Orthodox thing, I don't like really. Like when you see... I respect those things but I think...
S: You know, the Orthodox, the fanatics, you have [them] in every community. You have fanatic Jews, and you have fanatic Christians, and you have fanatic Muslims. And these are the problem.
M: Yes, and you have Opus Dei...
S: No, but these are not fanatics. Opus Dei is something else.
M: It's not fanatics but they are like...
S: Yes, but they don't bother you. It's different. But you have fanatic Christians too.
M: No, they don't bother you, but they told me a few things.
S: Of course.
(00:59:49 conversation about Opus Dei. 'Ultra, ultra Catholic.' Re: restrictions. In Vitro - OD opinions about In Vitro from OD friends. Judgement about Marianela's choice to In Vitro. Opinions about customs rooted in male dominance, hiding women, control, power. S: big iussue here now about abortion. G: Women's March in BA. S: comments on women's march and opinions about abortion.)
S: You know, we drove from Miami to Washington, about five months ago, and we didn't go on the coast, so we went inside. So we went through Appalachia.
M: (comment)
S: In many ways, we do.
M: I feel I'm [American].
G: Well, you've spent a long time there.
M: I feel sometimes more American than Uruguayan.
G: Yeah?
S: Yes, if you ask her, she would move to the US.
M: I love the US.
G: You do? That's good, that's nice. What do tou love about it?
S: Everything.
M: Everything! I don't know... it's like people are different, they have different concepts of life. Here people care about stupid things. There are other things more important in life than what people think here. I can communicate with people here that lived abroad and came back, yes. But with pure Argentinean people, I feel a difference. I don't know.
G: Do you feel the same about Uruguay?
M: Yeah. It's like, you change the way of living, the way of caring ahout life, and I don't know. You see life completely differently when you live in the US. And everything works out there, like, you are on the phone... then you get whatever you bought. It works. I mean, I don't know. Andf the people, they have different concepts of life that are different. I don't know what it is. And I've got friendships also... because maybe people that are in the same situations like I was, they are far from their family, so it's like you get close to those friends because your family is so far that that is your family. And that's what I miss. I miss them, because they are my family. And my family here, they are very nice, but once you live there for such a long time, you change so many things that when I I come to see my family... Yes, my family is OK, but sometimes I talk with them... it's like you are talking a different language. I don't want to be like, my family is not nice... it's that you change your concepts of life.

S; For us, the perfect place doesn't exist anymore. There's no one single perfect place. For us, what's perfect is being able to live part of our time and then being able to go and live part of our time in the US, and then, also, we enjoy seeing Europe or... seeing Lebanon.
M: Let me tell you, we'd like to live in Europe, we were thinking about going and living...
S: Yeah, next year we are going to go for four or maybe five months to Europe...
G: Where in Europe?
S: We're gonna spend like a month and a half or two months in each place.M: We like Italy, France, Spain. We have a lot of friends in Spain because they used to live, some of them used to live in New York and then they moved back to Spain.
S: England, I like England.
G: I really want to go to England.
S: I love England.
G: There's a symposium in Oxford every year that I'd like to go to, and maybe present a paper at.
S: Which one is that?
G: It's the Oxford Food Symposium.
S: You should meet Nadim Shehadi.
M: Yes!
S: Because he was at Oxford. He's a member of St. Anthony's College.
G: Well, I'll be in Boston in September.
S: Make sure you meet him, I'll introduce him to you.
(G talks about the Oxford Symposium. M+S about England, Scotland. G about my experience in France. S talks about trip to France.)
S: (01:17:22) You know, this is one of the good things about not having kids, the few good things. You know, you have the freedom to move around. And we do move around a lot. Now, we are going and we are coming back in May for, like a month and a half. And then we are going back, and then we are going to the US, and then we are going to Spain. And we come back and then we go again to Lebanon, and then we go to Israel, to Jordan, then to the US, come back at the end of November.
G: That sounds really great.
(01:17:56 G talks about having kids. S+M tried to have kids, tried with help, started to feel bad, we stopped. S+M talking about refrigerator.)
S: This is a very typical Lebanese taste. (talking about knefe?)
G: I made this recently but I don't know if I'm any good at it. I madce it from scratch. it was good...
M: You like it?
G: I love that orange blossom so much. You know I started to put it in lemonade? Orange blossom lemonade. I like it so much.
M: You know, in Lebanon, they put it in lemonade.
G: Yeah? They put it in a lot of things, huh? Rose in baklava, in a lot of things, no?
M: I don't like rose water.
G: I don't really use it.
M: I prefer the orange blossom.
G: Rose water, to me, feels like something I want to, like, put on my face.
S: A grandmother smell
M: You know what? I don't like the smell of the rose, it makes me kind of sick.

G: I love the orange. (I talk about [orange blossom] perfume with M. S: perfume and anthropologie. G: talking about orange groves when I was young. Memory of orchard. The flower smell.)
M: (01:22:27) For example, I remember when I was riding my bicycle in my town in Uruguay and smelling the orange blossom, the flower. So, I have this in my memory...
S: It's happiness. To me, it's the smell of happiness.
M: That's why it makes me kind of relaxed when I out this perfume [on]. So if you know of the perfume, please, it's like, it relaxes me, I love that smell!
S: You know, we have orange trees at the country home. Not too many but we have some, and this year they have so many flowers... so, in order to have good oranges, really you cannot allow all the flowers to blossom, so I cut the blossoms and I used to put it in the house, and the whole hosue was smelling like orange blossom!
G: Que romantico!
S: Yes! And I brought it here once. Rememnber? I brought it here. The whole houes was smelling like them
G: Do you have a lot of trees at the country house?
S: We have some.
G: Olives? Oranges?
S: Yeah, we have olives, we have oranges, we have peaches. We have, umm, plums. We have figs.
M: Lemon.
S: We have lemon. we have, umm...
M: How do you say *quinoto*?S: Kumquats.
M: Pomegranate.
S: Pomegranate. We have... what else? Almonds, walnuts, we have pecans.
M: And quince.
S: Quince.
G: *Membrillo?*
S: *Membrillo.* Mulberries. We have mulberries. We have blackberries. That's it, no?
G: That's quite a lot! That sounds amazing.
S: Different seasons.
M: Yeah, but the thing is that the guy is not very good at...
S: I told her...
G: at the vegetables.
M: At the vegetables. He said, "I don't know what is happening with the tomatoes! My friend, in his home, he has a lot of tomatoes, but here I don't know what is happening!"
G: Tomatoes are difficult.
S: No, one year we have tomatoes like this.
G: ...they require a little bit of different attention than most other vegetables...
S: He doesn't do any of that.
G: If you just plant them and water them, they won't do very well.
S: Maybe you should come and work? There is a thing, people come for a period of time... (S talks about WWOOFing, work exchange. G says we did it in Bariloche.)
M: In the summer, I love to do - because the tomatoes are so good - I love, love gazpacho in the summer, but you need good tomatoes!

S: I can eat tomatoes, like, all the time.
G: Just slices.
S: Like this, I don't need salt.
M: We love tomatoes. I make the gazpacho for a few days and then I make it again.
S: She makes a good gazpacho.
M: It's very good for the summer. And it's very healthy because the gazpacho is not only tomato, you have cucumber, pepper, onion, garlic - raw! Everything is raw. It's very good.
G: It's delicious.
M: With oil, a little bit of vinegar, pepper. We like it spicy sometimes, some things spicy. But you need very ripe tomatoes for that.
S: She makes good ceviche, she told me (Giselle). Maybe you should tell her to go to *El Delfin*. This is where you get good fish.
G: Here?
S: It's in Barracas. It's a little bit farther.
G: It's a restaurant?
S: No, it's a fish shop. It's probably the best fish shop in Buenos Aires.
M: Have you been to the Peruvian restaurant here?
G: Not here, I've been to Peru. There's one in my neighborhood but I never see anyone eating there so I don't go there.
M: You should go to *Sipan*.
S: It's the best one here, it's in Palermo, not far from my office.
M: *Tiradito... Ceviche...*
S: And it's good quality fish, the sauces are amazing.
M: The fish is not like the US or Europe.
S: But *Sipan* is pretty good.
M: The tuna.S: It's the tuna you get here.
G: ...Oregon albacore is the greatest.
S: I know, you have good fish.
G: It ruined me for tuna, it's the only tuna I can eat now. It's big and red.
S: Here it's more pink-ish.
M: The quality of fish here is not like the US, that's why I'm telling you...
G: Because it's not very popular, huh? Nobody eats fish...
S: Nobody eats fish.
M: (something about sushi)
S: Since you are into food and history, you know that if you look at the food that Argentineans ate in 1810 -
M: Do you want any more?
G: No, that was delicious.
S: - in the coloianl time(s) -
G: (no to coffee)
M: You have to try this.
S: I am telling you about history and food - in Argentina, the main, staple food in colonial times was fish.
G: Really?
S: Yeah, and they used to fish...
G: In the city?

S: In Buenos Aires. If you look at what the menu was, it was 70% fish, maybe 10% meat, because there wasn't too much beef at that time. And the vegetables, it was whatever you could find around here, but it was mostly fish from *Rio del Plata*.G: Why did that change? What's the water quality like?
S: Well, with the growth of the city, I mean, you have 20 million people living here, imagine. I would think that the water quality...
M: Do you want one of these?
S: No, *mi amor*... deteriorated greatly. So, I imagine that part (loud sound), but also, whatb happened is - you know, how Argentina became a cow country. Buenos Aires was founded twice. The first time it was founded, I think it was 1510, the Spanish came and they brought some cows and they founded the city of Buenos Aires. A few years later, it was totally destroyed by the Indians and the cows ran away and they went to the Pampas. Then, Buenos Aires was refounded like 40 years later - the second found[ing] of Buenos Aires. And it moved on. And they saw that there were a lot of animals because nobody ate them and they reproduced by themselves and because the climate was good, it was like the cows were happy. Nobody ate them, nobody killed them, and they reproduced in 50 years like crazy! So, by the 1800s, there were more cows than people in Argentina, and then the British started to import the cows, but not because of the beef, because they couldn't bring it to England, they were bringing it because of the hides. So, then they would go hunt the cows in the country and leave the carcass of animnals rotting in the field. So they took only the hides and brought them to England because they were interested in the leather. So, when the Argentineans saw all this, they started consuming this meat before it was rotten and they started to get the taste for meat. So, they developed - the guauchos - they developed the taste for meat. Because it was there, the animnals were slaughtered and it was a free meal. So they started grilling this meat and they started cooking [it] and they started putting on salt. Well, when the Argentineans started putting on salt, then the British started importing salted meat.
M: Yeah, because you didn't have the refrigerator at the time.
S: There was no refrigeration. Until the 1900s. In the 1900s, the British came with the refrigerator, and this is when Argentina exploded with the beef business.
G: Yes, it became a consumer product....
S: and international, Argentina began exporting. But that's the story! So that;s why we started eating meat.
G: And that just squashed the fish industry.
S: Nobody wanted fish because the meat was there, free. It was free!
G: Free and delicious.
M: And also because here the cow walks, so it has less fat than, for example, in the US. The weather here helps...
S: Yeah, this is grassfed and this is an extensive... every cow has one hectar. I mean, you see cows roaming the field.
M: And also the weather. In the US, well in Texas... well I don't know how the Winter is in Texas?
S: You get snow, you get winter in Texas.
M: Well, here in Buenos Aires you don't get snow.
S: Here the weather is good all year round.
G: Yeah, and it's the space, they get exercise, they're not stressed.

S: And the Pampa is green the whole year round. The whole year round, it's green. It's not like Texas.
M: So, they are outside walking around and eating grass.
S: And the other main difference is the animals in the US are slaughtered with 750 kilos and here it's 250 - 300 kilos.
G: And they're slaughtered under incredible stressful conditions, so... I did some work in Washington, Eastern Washington, mopstly wheat country. (talking about E.Washington wheat fields and old-school, monocropper farmer/rancher that started beef project. One corner of a dozen cows in a lot of space. Conflicting ideas about ag: beef v. wheat. My ideas about USDA slaughtering practices. My history with beef. Beef in Argentina. Different meat in Argentina. Asado.)
M: You like the *morcilla*?!
G: Yeah, I like it.
M: No way! And you like...
G: At first, it took me a while, but...
M: *chinchurrin*?
G: *Chinchurrin* not so much.M: And the molleja?
G: I don't know what that is.
S: It's a sweetbread.
G: Oh!
M: You like it?
G: I don't know if I've had it.
S: The French love it.
G: The French love it, my dad loves it.
M: And the sausage?
G: The sausage I love.
S: *Chorizo*.
G: It's different. The only thing I don't like is the *chinchurrin* and the stomach lining, the thing in *locro*. What's it called? It's the white...
S: *Mondongo.*
M: You like it.
S: I love it, I like everything.
G: But that's the interesting thing - being a person that studies food - is that you grew up with that, no?
S: *Mondongo?*
G: Yeah, you've had it since you were a kid?
M: Yeah.
G: So, we get...
M: Because in Lebanon, they have...
S: Do you eat the raw liver? Of the lamb?
G: No.
S: That's a Lebanese [dish].
M: My father loved it.
G: The only liver I've ever had is a pate.

S: In Lebanon, they eat the raw liver of the lamb. I think there is a picture in that book. And I eat it.
M: Also, and the *mondongo*...
G: That's the lining?
S: yeah.
M: In Lebanon, you have it...
S: The *locro* doesn't have *mondongo.*
G: No?
S: It's the *museca*.
G: What's that?
S: *Museca* (don't know spelling)? It's the Italian *locro*. But in Argentina, the *locro* doesn't have...
G: The one [I had}, it was Independence Day when she gave it to me.
S: But that's not *locro*. If it has *mondongo*, it's not *locro*.
G: She gave me a soup and it had that in it.
S: Yeah, that's *museca*. It's an Italian...
G: ...version.
S: Yes, the Italians brought it here. It's very similar to *locro.*
G: But Cordoba has a pretty strong Italian culinary influence.
S: YES, very strong.
G: So all the salami... we went to all these little cured meat shops, they're amazing.
S: La Colonia (name 01:38:09).
G: Loved that.
S: These are all Italians.
(G talking about Vero, Indpendence Day, serving 'locro' to me. Traditional dish. 01:38:33. S for sure that's *museca.* G talks about *mondongo.*)
M: Because in Lebanon, with that thing, you cook something they call (name 01:38:53).
S: Yeah, but that's not the cow, it's the lamb. With the lining of the stomach of the lamb.
G: And what do you do with it?
S: They stuff it. With rice and meat and pine nuts. And they cook it - they boil it - and they eat it.
G: And cut it?
S: Yeah.
G: That's so good.
S: That's Marianela's specialty. (talking about kanafeh she brought out)
M: It's with, em...
S: Semolin[a].
M: Semolin[a]. Butter, sugar, and then a syrup.
S: No milk?
M: Ah, milk. Syrup that you put orange blossom in, the syrup. You bake this. Then it has some, um, baking powder also. So when you bake it.
S: The baking powder is to make it fluffy, no?
M: Yeah. So it can rise a little bit. And then you take it from the oven, when it's hot you put syrup. It has to be hot, with the syrup, with the orange blossom. And then you pour everything and it starts absorbing these things.
G: It's divine.

S: So you learned something new, the (*namoura)*. Marianela will give you the recipe.
(G+S about questionnaire)
M: The semolina, you can get it in the Lebanese store...
S: In the Lebanese store, you have *semoline*? I've never seen it.
G: But it's not flour? It's a coarse, ground...
M: Semolina - it's not flour.
S: How do you call semolina? It's semoline in English, no?
M: Semoline? I don't know...
G: It's corn, right?
S: No. It's hard wheat but it's called semoline, no? How is it called in Spanish?
M: Semoline.
G: Oh, then it's not in English.
M: How do you call it in English?
S: I have no idea, I don't even know it in Spanish.
M: Because I saw it at the store in Miami and I don;t remember the name in English there. because I saw it and said this is the thing that I need.
S: Yeah, it's semolina. It's called semolina.
G: OK, but it's just coarse.
S: (reading from phone/web) 'Semolina is the coarse, purified, wheat midlings of durham wheat, mainly used in making pasta and cous cous. The word semolina can also refer to sweet dessert made from semoilina and milk.'
M: Yeah.
S: It's called semolina.
G: Yeah, the pasta is how I know semolina but that's a fine flour. But it's the same thing, but coarse...
S: Yeah, they show here the fine and the coarse. But this is not too coarse.
G: No, it's just not a flour, it's got some grit to it. In a great way.
M: I make, like...
(S reading about semolina on web. 'You can buy it on Amazon.' It's the same, yeah that's it.)
M: I bring it from Uruguay because the one from here is terrible.
S: You have so much wheat there I'm sure you have semolina.
G: So you buy it when you go there?
M: When I go to Uruguay, I bring the semolina.
S: Because here it's not so good, here it's too coarse. I Uruguay, it's thinner.
G: Softer. How often do you go to Uruguay?
S: I go once a year, she goes probably twice or three times a year. Sometimes she goes to Uruguay and not to Cordoba to visit the family.
G: Mm, I love it.
(M showing G something - package of semolina.)
M: In Miami, I can find it also.
G: But it's called *fideos*?
M: Yeah, *fideos molidos.* But it's semolina.
G: And you just know by sight that it's semolina? Cool.
M: So I make two bags like this one in a pan like this, you put this in a bowl, and then you have to melt the butter, 200g. I'm thinking in... Because in...

S: 200g? 8oz.
M: Yeah, because when I go to the US and I make this, I buy it...
S: 8oz is 200g. This is like 18oz.
M: No, but I buy two of these bags.
S: OK, whatever.
M: Two of these bags. Then you melt 200g - for one kilo, one kilo is two of these [bags] - you need 200g of butter, melted. I melt it in the microwave. The you mix it with your hands, then put one cup of sugar, then 3T of baking powder, then you have - the milk, it has to be like lukewarm, not warm-warm but not cold. I put it in the microwave, like, 50 seconds or something, And then you start adding that milk and mixing that thing. I know when it's ready when you turn the bowl like this and the dough comes [away] from the bowl. And then you out it in the pan and then with a knife you start, like, making, you start, like, cutting this thing, this dough, like this, in slices, and then like this.
G: Almost like *kibbi*.
M: Yes. Then, whe you start making this, the *nammoura*, you have to put the syrup.
G: Before you bake it?
M: Yes. Because the syrup has to be ready when this thing is ready from the oven.
G: Oh, I see.
M: The syrup is, like, one kilo, I think.
S: One kilo is a little bit less than 2#.
M: A little bit less than one kilo, I think. Like 900g of sugar in a pan and you cover it with water. Cover it, like, put a little bit more. You cover it with water and you add a little bit more water. You put it on the stove and start boiling, then you have to try - you know how to make syrup? Then you put the spoon and it makes, like, the... So it's ready and you take it from the stove and add this, the orange blossom. I put, like...
G: A capfull?
M: A capfull, like, 9 or 10. Into the syrup, you mix it, then you pour it when this is hot. You take it from the oven, it's hot, then you start pouring the syrup that is hot also and you see that start absorbsing the syrup. But at one point, the syrup stays there. You see it's going to stay there, is it going to absorb? But you wait a little bit, eventually, it starts absorbing and you add more. But this time, for example, I didn't put the whoel syrup. I realized that it was enough and I [thought] it was fine. I left in the pan, like, a little bit like this, and I throw it away. Sometimes it's too much, I don't like it too sweet.
G: It's perfect.
M: And then, I make it the day before I am going to eat it. It's better.
G: It sets a little.
M: Yeah.
G: That makes sense, it seems like it might fall apart, it's so syrup-y.
M: That's why you have to wait the whole night [for it] to stay there, cover it.
G: You keep it cold or just on the counter?
M: On the counter, I cover it with something, like, once it's [cooled], with a film, I cover the pan. let it stay until the next day. Ah! And then I put the almonds. When I am going to bake it, before baking it, you put the almonds. One in each square. Then, because you marked the squares, sob then you cut it and you put it like that.
G: I feel like I've seen it but I can't believe I've never had it. It's not too difficult?!

M: Yeah! That's the thing. The other thing is the baklava - the problem is you have all these layers and you have to put the butter and then you have to put all these, i don't know, the nuts. (Breath) It's so much.
G: It's labor-intensive. What kind of nuts would you make that with?
M: With, I think the best one is with pistachip and almond. I don't like it with walnuts. And then what I love more than the baklava is the *maamoul*.
G: Yeah, the cookies, right?
M: The white ones. It's like that, filled with...
G: Dates?M: Dates, or with pistachio. And then with some sugar powder on top, that's white from it. For me, *mmamoul*, it's much better than the other ones [desserts]. But I buy it only in Lebanon or maybe in Miami. But, to make this (*nammoura*)... imagine one kilo for both of us. I make it when I have some people, you know, invite people over for lunch or dinner or something. If not, I don't make it at home. It's too sweet. He likes it but it's not good for you. I exercise and everything but imagine eating that every day. It's not good. it has a lot of sugar. So...
G: So, a group meal food. Like we talked about!
M: For example, when I go to Cordoba for Christmas, sometimes I make it becaue you have a lot of people and everybody is going to eat that. Or if I have a dinner or something. If not, like, let's make *nammoura* just to eat with the coffee? No. Because I don't know how to make half-portions of it! I mean, I know how to do it this way and that's it!
G: Is that a Lebanese thing? Making such large portions? Every woman in my family - nio idea how to make food for less than 12ppl. (G recounting mom making kibbi on my birthday. Just for the two of us.) I said, "Mom, why didn't you just make a little one?" "I I don't know how!"
M: That's the thing, I don't know how! So, that's why I make it when I know we are going to a group or have a dinner or have a lunch or something. Because, I don't know how to do half. That's it. It has been a long time [since] I've done it, so I said, I have to do it.
G: Did you learn it from your mom?
M: Yes.
S: This? Yes.
M: At home they used to do other things. I didn't like very much, like, (01:52:30 can't make out word).
G: I don't know what that is.
M: I remember seeing that at home, it's something, kind of a [dough]. I don't know how she makes it. And then she was rubbing like this with the hands and throwing it in the oil, fried. And they would make, like, something very small, like the Spaniards make the [desserts]. But this is <u>sweet</u> and they would throw these little balls - they are like balls, like, the size of a golf ball - in the syrup.
G: Oh, so sweet.
M: Yeah, my father loved that. But it takes a lot of time to throw all these balls in the oil, frying those things, then throwing them in the syrup, and then he was eating all these things. ([Ahwaymed] 01:53:40) I remember that. She was cooking that once in a while, like once a month, maybe. Then the [*macroon],*
it's like gnocchi, it's a dough the shape of a gnocchi, it has anis - how do you say in English?
S: Yeah, anis seed.
M: anis seed? - I <u>love</u> that - and then with syrup also, you put the syrup on top of that, ah, it's so good. I love that. But the dough is differnt than this one, I don't remember. I remember that.

G: Was it like a cookie?
M: No, because the shape of that cookie, say, like a gnocchi. The same shaope like a gnocchi. I remember my mom doing it with a fork.
G: She made a lot of desserts?
M: But this type, you know, they are different than the baklava.
G: Well, I think baklava is the things that became known.
M: Because, also, this is relatively easy for a restaurant because you make it in a big pan and you cut it like this. But imagine this thing you have to do one by one. The gnocchi with the *ahwaymek* is one... I remember she was grabbing it with her hand like this and throwing it in the pan. Yeah, like this.
G: Does she still make that?
M: No.
G: Does she cook much?
M: No. Not anymore. My father passed away a long time ago and, for her, she cannot eat all these things anymore, she's having problems with her liver, and she had some things with her stomach - how do you say? - gastric thing. So, you know, she cannot eat anything fried...
G: Do you think maye if your dad love it than it was a thing she kind of did for him?
M: yes. She had time - and the maid! She taught her maid! She used to live with us. And the maid is still cooking Lebanese things, yes!
G: And she's Uruguayan?
M: Yes! But because she loved to cok, so she was learning from my mom and helping my mom alsoi because I remember being at home and all these Lebanese people coming for lunch at home - I remember when I was a kid - and my mom cooking all that food, the [*game*], all the things, the *kibbi*, the *tabbouleh*, all these things, and for 20-30 people. So, she had the maid...
G: Was it a special occasion?
M: Yes! Because of the Lebanese Union, all these things, they would come. I remember the table setting here [and would fill up]. I remember long tables and all thes epeopel. That's why she taught the maid how to cook because she need[ed] help!
G: But your mom was always cooking too? She just helped her?
M: Of course. So that's how the maid learned that. And she loved to cook, also. The maid loved to cook. Because you have to like to cook to do all these things. And she's still cooking it! I remember - we go to see her and she's still making all these things at home. She likes it. She makes the grapeleaves, you know? And the *kibbi*.
(G talking about Argentine cooks at the church. They make *kibbi* at home. Learned from priests. No veggie fatayer for kids.)
G: Did you eat more Lebanese food when you were a kid, than other [things]?
M: No, I remember eating Lebanese food during the week, but especially more over the weekend. Because I remember my father used, he was always telling us, because he likes to enjoy the food, and during the week he's working. And if he eats a lot - because in Uruguay in the little towns, you close at 12, the store, and then you go back to work at 2 o'clock. You take a little siesta. So even if you eat a lot - he likes to enjoy the food - but says "I cannot go back to work!" If you eat a lot... "I can enjoy over the weekend so I stay at home, relax." He would have his arak, you know, with the tabbouleh, the kibbi and everything. And then, after that, he'd go to take a nap! (laughs) he would stay the whole afternoon, relaxing, eat all the food, I remember it, he used to eat... So that's why I remember eating Lebanese food more on the weekend. But I remember during the week, we would have the labneh - always the labneh - the zeitoun, and

maybe fried eggplant, you know? With a little bit of tahini, or maybe like that (baba gannoush). Or cauliflower with tahini. Like, little things. But the big food, like [*gahme*], or the grapeleaves and everything would be on the weekend.
G: Meats and sweets.
M: Yes.
G: Did you guys eat much Uruguayan food at home?
M: Yeah. During the week yes. Like *milanesa*, that's the... Or the tortilla. You know, like, empanadas.
G: It was mixed with the eggplant, tahini?
M: Or pasta! Sometimes on the weekend we [would] have a pasta or maybe an *asado.* But...
G: Would you have food from Uruguay and Lebanon in the same meal? Just all kinda mixed?
M: No. Well, yes because maybe my mom would make like a fried eggplant or whatever and then we would have a nmeat, uruguayan...
G: Milanesa?
M: Yeah, something like that. During the week. But over the weekend it was purely... like if it was Lebanese, it was all Lebanese. And then my father would put the music - we had the disc at that time, we didn't have the CD, remember the disc? I don't know if you know them - I remember having that, listening to the music...
G: Was it Lebanese music?
M: Yeah!
G: And they learned all that from their parents?
M: Yeah. And I have a friend of my mom, she came from Lebanon and she taught me how to dance. Belly dance and whatever it was. I remember I was 6 or 7 years old and she was teaching me how to... I remember that. I love to dance. I didn't learn profressionally but I like to dance because I feel the music since I was a kid. I grew up with the music, my father always playing this disc. And then we have the CD, no, the cassette, and then we went to the CD, and now the iPod.
G: And now, none of it, just a tiny little machine.
S: So, ladies, what are you drinking?
M: So what did you learn today about...
S: Well, a lot of things from this lady.
(laughs. Talking about questionnaire and working on survey gthat afternoon. Asking Marianela to fill out questionnaire so 'we don't pressure her.' Answer what you feel like answering, maybe we interfere in your answers - we're here, we put pressure. Helpful for me to know what's missing. Who we're going to send it to, me collecting answers, working with asnwers. Talking about young woman in youth union, get-together I was suposed to go to. Importance of getting answers from different generations. Sergio nephew - 3rd generation, mixed heritage. 02:05:24)
G: That's the thing I was saying was interesting - because I almost have more interest in Lebanon than my mother at this point - I wanna go back, I wanna make all the food. And she's such a proud, Lebanese woman. But she's not trying to expand... she doesn't need to know new recipes. When we left Lebanon, I asked her if she would go back and she said probably not. She said she felt, like, kind of at peace and satisfied and also she flet fulfilled knowing that I would go back, so it;s like she;s handing me the torch. Ok, now it's your country, you can forge this relationship.
M: But your mom is young?

G: She's 63 or 64. And that's why that answer surprised me. Like you've got plenty of years ahead of you, you don't want to go back even once or twice? She doesnt; travel much. She's a world apart from you guys. They haven't traveled internationally, significantly, most of my life. I mean, the furthest we went was Canada. They aren't travelers. But that's the thing, she's so far removed at this point that Lebanon feels like really traveling instead of going home.
(M says something)
G: I'm very full! It's so good, but...
S: Marianela, you have to have this, it's just a drop.
M: Tomorrow, how am I going to work out?
S: Tomorrow, you work out, and your burn it. You have this for lunch.
M: This one for lunch? No, no. On Thursday I'll have it for lunch.
S: On Thursday, I'm having lunch with you, here.
M: Ah! I was going to ask you - do you want me to buy you a *una costiletta* for Thursday?
S: Yes, with bone.
G: What's *costiletta*?
S: *Costiletta* is T-bone. It's my going away from Argentina treat. I don't eat meat in the US mostly.
M: You know why? Because...
S: Where are you going to buy it?
M: That's why I ask.
S: At Disco.
M: I can buy it tomorrow.
S: T-bone. You want to the filet on one side and rib-eye on the other side.
M: Outside, on the box, it doesn't say t-bone. In Spanish. It's not going to say 't-bone.' How does it say it?
S: It doesn't say t-bone here... *costiletta con lomo*. It's the filet mignon on one side and rib-eye on the other.
M: I mean, eat meat, you see, but just not like, raw.
S: And if it's too thin, bring two!
G: I only eat meat when it's very, very good, I can go without it.
S: You know, in the US, I can stand two months without touching meat. But here? Don't think that I eat a lot, maybe once a week, maybe every ten days.
M: In the US, we try to eat more fish and seafood.
S: I make a barbecue... when we go to the country home. Next time you come, maybe you'll come with your husband, and we'll go to the country home. We'll spend a weekend there.
G: That would be wonderful.
S: It's a nice place, so relaxing.
G: My husband is a country guy, he grew up in the country.
S: This is, like, it feels like country. It's a compound in which you have, like a country club, basically. So, you have 2,700 hectars, so that's about 10,000 acres. Within that, you have a gold course, polo fields, and you have everything there. And then each owner has, like, 20 acres, 25 acres, 30 acres. So we have our land within that compound, but you don't see them...
M: Yeah, it's far.
S: My land is, like, 6 blocks. So the closest neighbor is at least 2 blocks away.

M: That's the good thing - that you know you have your neighbors but it's far, so you have your privacy.
S: So we have a lot of friends that we've made, already, over the years. And sometimes when we go there on weekends, so you get together in the house of one, you cook, and then you go to another house...
M: Sometimes we make them Lebanese food. They love it.
G: Do they ask for it?
S: Well, you know, our house is called *Republica de Libano*, so they know.
M: No, but, sometimes we tell them, OK, instead of *asado* - it gets kind of boring - we're going to make you kafta and then chicken and everything. And these things... and, ay!, they love it.
S: But sometimes I do make, like, a goat in the oven or, I make *asado* too. So, it depends. I like to cook *asado.*
M: And I like to cook sometimes, you know, I make a risotto.
S: Sometimes we make pasta, you know, in the Winter when we want to eat something light.
M: I like to make the risotto with truffles and things... and I get everything from the US. Because here, hmph...
G: The spices...
M: And the truffle oil, you have to bring it from the US. I bring the... not champignons, the, em, mushrooms! I have to bring them from the US, of course they are dry. Because here you don't have the variety you have there.
G: Is it because Argentina doesn't import a lot of...
S: Well, it's because of the previous government. They blocked everything that was imported. Now, this governmetn is beginning to pick up. And the reality is that people did not develop the...
M: But it's expensive.
S: Yeah, on top of that, it's expensive.
M: It's expensive. For example, let me tell you. Just to let you know something - this chocolate that I like in the US, the brand is Ritter.
G: Delicious, with the hazelnuts?
M: I love it. Yeah! They are from Germany. I buy it in Miami for 2.5 - 3 dollars. Here it's 9 dollars.
G: Taxes?
S: Yeah, it's expensive, the import tax, and... the shipping. This is the end of the world.
M: Imported cookies, all these cookies with hazelnut, from Italy. Ay, I bring everything! You have to see our suitcases. Everything.
G: Spices, cookies...
M: Spices. Cookies. Cereals. All the cereals that I buy in Whole Foods, they are all organic, you know, wiht not too much sugar, a lot of protein, all this. I bring everything from Whole Foods. The cereals...
S: It's funny when we come to customs...M: Even the soap!
S: We bring six suitcases. Six. And, you know, people already look at us - do you have something to declare? Plus 2 carry-ons. So they say, "Do you have something to declare?" We say, "No." "What?!? Are you sure? But you're bringing six suitcases." I say, "No, everything is for personal consumption." So they start opening it and they say, "What did you do? Did you go to the supermarket before coming?" "Yes." "Did you bring any electronics?" "No." "Any clothing?" "No." (laughs) Supermarket stuff!

G: Because there's different taxes on electronics and clothing?
S: Yes, all the Argentineans want to bring electronics or clothing. But we don't bring any of that!
G: But you have to make it look like it's used?
S: Yeah, I mean...
M: I mean, I buy clothes in Europe, I buy clothes in the US. If I buy something, maybe it stays in Miami, or maybe I bring something here.
S: But if you want, you bring two or three pieces, or four pieces. I don't bring the suit. Argentineans go and they buy everything and everything brand new, and they bring it here. Sometimes even to sell it. If I bring, I'll bring two or three things that I bought. I don't bring the whole suitcase full of clothes.
G: If you do that, because (my friends from Cordoba buying from Florida to bring home, wear it).
S: It's OK, they wouldn't stop you for that. Unless you bring three of the same, three of a kind.
M: But if you open my pantry, you'll think that you are in the US.
G: Because you can't find any of that here?
M: No. Everything.
S: Even the pasta.
M: Look!
G: Do you think it'll change?
S: Yes, it's changing.
G: It's changing already...
M: Look! Everything is from the US!
(ALL in kitchen looking at pantry ingredients. From Whole Foods. Edamame. Vanilla. Kim Chi (briny thing). From Spain. Many things from Spain.)
S: Giselle, don't think that all Argentinean homes are like this, this is exceptional. This is exceptional.
G: But it would be nice if you could get it here, yes?
(ALL continue looking at pantry. Coffee. From Lebanon. We brought this from Lebanon. Dropped a can of fish. Marianela disappointed - 'we cannot eat that now.' Still showing me pantry items. Maaftoul, 'to make Grabbiyeh.' Smells like tuna. Don't worry.).
G: So you just know what you like and you go there and you just [get it]?
M: Yeah.
(Cleaning up tuna/glass.)
M: You see?! I bring everything from the US. [Foul]. Soup. Lemongrass. Tika Masala. Everything. Everything is from the US. Even the salt is from the US. I don't even buy salt here. (Tajin (seasoning)! From Mexico. Put it on popcorn. S puts it on asado. Loves it. Talks about price of something. M talks about something very spicy. Place in NY with incredible spices 02:19:15. Seven Spices. From Daily Bread. in Miami.)
M: Ah! This one is good!
G: 'Lebanese Seven Spices.'
M: But this one is kind of spicy.
S: It's hot.
G: What are the seven? Cumin, paprika, black pepper, cloves, coriander, (can't make out other two). Do you put this in *kibbi*?
M: The thing is that it has paprika. Paprika is spicy and not everybody loves spice. So, you have to know if, that day, you know, the people that you are having at home, if they like it.

G: But sometimes you do.
M: Mmm, it's so good.
S: It's spicy, it's hot.
M: It's hot because of the paprika.
S: We would do it for us but not for friends.
M: But maybe because those friends you know they like spicy things.
S: Yeah, but you have to be careful.
M: You have to be careful with very spicy things.
G: Because there really is not much spice in Argentine foods...
M: Nooo!
G: But there's not a lot on Lebanese either, yeah? Here and there?
S: More than here.
G: More like warming spices.
S: Not hot but spicy.
M: This one is not spicy but it's the seven spices. I need my glasses for this - what does it have?
S: Black pepper, white pepper.
G: No paprika.
M: Yeah, you see?
S: *Canela* is... what is it? Cinnamon, ginger, um, *nuez moscada*... nutmeg, *gindo*, I don't know what *gindo* is, and clove. *Gindo* is, I think, (it's semet), I think.
G: I've never heard of that.
S: Yeah, *Gindo* is the guy who runs it... (laughs)
G: But it would be nice to get those things here?
S: Now it's becoming a little bit more available.
G: I think there's a new sort of health consciousness happening.
(S talks about niece, obesity in Argentina, distinction of middle-upper class to lower in health foods).
S: Maybe at that level (upper-middle class), but at the popular level? No. They are eating more junk.
M: You know, I see more people obese here.
G: Yeah, the first time I came here was 12 years ago. And even in that time. I've been in between, but I was in Patagonia... but I noticed here more of that than I remembered.
S: So I think they are more obese now than before. She seems to think that the young people are more conscious and now they are eating less. But it's probably a certian level of society, not everybody.
G: Because there seems to be... I have come across more retaurants that are vegan or plant-based menus.
S: Yeah, but few.
G: Few, and it's a particular audience. (G talking about large woman drinking a pepsi at 10am while I was having coffee with brekafast. Observation, don't remember that.)
S: No, it's changing for the worst, I think.
G: But then at the same time (dieteticas, etc.) but they're all in Palermo, no?
S: But it's middle class and upper middle class. The lower classes, I think they are eating worst and worst. I mean, a lot of pizza, a lot of junk. They eat the street food and it's very unhealthy, and not very good. Probably in the upper levels of society, people are becoming more conscious

but, you know... everybody wants to be thin... but it's not like,. I don't see it in the schools, to begin with.
(G talking about food at school - pizza, fattening, we have the same problem. Health movement in particular socio-economic class. Whole Foods example. M: fish for sure I get at Whole Foods. Freshness. 02:25:37)
M: Then, I realized that when I buy the chicken there it's more expensive. But once I make a soup for him, with that chicken from Whole Foods, he said, "it reminds me of when I was a kid." You know, when you were a kid you have the real chicken. Not now, this chicken has plastic and chemical things... So, when he said that, I said I have to continue buying the chicken here, even though I know it's more expensive than the supermarket.
(G talking about buying meat in Hood River, direct from farmers.)
M: For example, in Costco, now it says organic. I think it's organic.
S: In the US, they don't play with these things.
(G talking about meaning of organic and loopholes. Packaging in the US, difficulty of discerning meaning of labels and certifications. S agrees.
M: But in Costco I tink the chicken that we buy is good. The one that says organic. We make the shistaouk, the one that is wihtout the skin. Boneless, skinless. The fish we buy...
S: It's good. The meat that they have is good too.
M: We don't buy meat because it's such a big quantity for just the two of us. Even if I freeze it.
S: We don't buy it but I see it. I see it and the lamb they have is good. Costco? I love Costco.
(G talking about Costco)
S: When Marianela goes, it's $250. When I go, it's $900. (laughs)
G: I get so overwhelmed in Costco.
S: I buy so much... junk.
G: The cheese is like...
S: No, but I buy things that I don't need.
M: But the cheese and things like that, I mean, we see this and say how can we eat all that cheese?
G: Maybe a family of six, but two people...
M: Forget it. For example, we buy the...
S: Cucumbers, tomatoes. The things that we eat a lot, we do buy.
M: The cucumbers! For example, when I go in the summer, the tomatoes, because I make the gazpacho, and I need I don't know how many boxes of things. Then I buy mango. Manog, like that, I don't care. The the peaches. Those things.
G: I buy lemons (etc.)
M: And the blueberries and the raspberries! And these boxes...
S: The thing is that's part of their business.
M: The pineapple.
(S talking about Costco business philosophy. They make the customer store the goods. More for less. G talking about distance. S buy things for copmputer, TV. M talking about S in Costco.)
M: Ah! These napkins are from Costco! Because here they are terrible.
S: The toilet paper is not because we ran out, but normally we bring the toilet paper too from the US.
M: At one point, I used to even... Ah! No, I bring the dishwasher [detergent] from Costco. (Don't anymore because of suitcase risk.)
S: It's funny, you have to see the custom guy when he opens.

M: The paper towel! Look! I have to show her... (showing the difference between paper towels 'from the US and from here.' Argentine paper towels for cleaning lady, US paper towels for M. Saran wrap. Ziploc bags. Talking about saran from here breaking.)